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~~Percy C. Langdon.~~

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G. Philip Irvine

121.



HELPS TO MEDITATION.



SKETCHES FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

BY THE

Rev. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.,

RECTOR OF ST. MARK'S PHILADELPHIA,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD.

FIFTEENTH EDITION.

VOL. I.

ADVENT TO TRINITY.

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TO MY FATHER IN GOD,

The Right Reverend

HORATIO POTTER, D D., L.L.D., D.C.L., &c.

BISHOP OF NEW YORK.

By his kind permission, and with sincere filial respect
and affection,

I DEDICATE THIS WORK.

PREFACE.

THESE Sketches are put forth in the earnest desire of helping some faithful souls, in however small a degree, to a loving grasp of some few thoughts from that great treasure-house of truth, the Bible.

Their chief object is to assist in overcoming one difficulty in Meditation, the arrangement of the materials, by supplying points for consideration, without developing them so as to encroach on the province of Meditation. Their aim is to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. Beside this, I have hoped to promote the Study of the Bible, by giving a devotional exposition of the parts treated applying directly to the practical needs of the soul's daily life, thus making the duty of reading the Bible more interesting, and profitable. And, at the request of many of my brother Clergy, I have had particular regard to the need, which seems to exist in these busy days, of Outlines of Sermons for the use of those Clergy who, from press of work, may have little leisure for study, and which, while supplying the matter and line of thought, will leave room for individual development.

The Second Volume will contain Meditations for the latter half of the Christian year, and will, I hope, be issued next Spring.

This work has been written in no controversial spirit, and I desire, as a loyal son of the Church of England, that every expression be interpreted by the Book of Common Prayer, and such great Divines of the Anglican Communion as Jeremy Taylor. The Book has been examined by several theologians, but if through inadvertence anything in it be found to conflict with the expressed teaching of the Church, of which I am an unworthy Priest, I hereby declare that I unreservedly withdraw it.

There remains but the pleasing task of acknowledging my obligations to those who have aided me.

To my Bishop first, for allowing me to dedicate my work to him, I tender my hearty thanks. I feel it no small honour and encouragement to be permitted to place upon the first page the name of a Prelate who for more than a quarter of a century, through dark and perilous times, has safely and prosperously guided the Church in the largest Diocese in this country; and this is only one more added to previous acts of kindness, which have won my love, as well as my admiration, and respect.

My thanks are next due to the Bishop of Springfield, for writing, amid the pressure of other work, the Introduction to this Book. When I came into this

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Diocese it was to take up one of the works which, before his elevation to the Episcopate, had been for thirteen years his care ; and I deeply appreciate the kindness which has led him to associate his name with this work of mine.

To Mr. J. E. Learned, of Newark, for his great patience, labour, and ability, in correcting all the proofs of the Book, both as it appeared in Parts, and in this revised edition, I owe a debt of gratitude that I can but inadequately acknowledge.

Finally, I would ask any to whom these Sketches may prove of use, of their charity sometimes to pray, that, by the mercy of GOD, he who has here endeavoured to help, and ventured to preach to others, may not himself be a cast-away.

ALFRED G. MORTIMER.

S. MARY'S RECTORY,
WEST NEW BRIGHTON, S. I., NEW YORK.
1st September, 1881.

INTRODUCTION.

OUR knowledge, the information which we possess of whatever kind, falls into two divisions, *Science* and *Revelation*. The one is the result of human observation, and research, and experience; the other is the direct gift of God. The former sums up man's accumulations in the fields open to his investigation and labour since he has been upon the earth; the latter is entirely independent of man's will or wish, and is communicated in amount as God sees fit, and in time as He pleases. Science at the best is imperfect: it is full of mistakes; present discoveries correct past errors, but often make new blunders, which remain to be set right in the future. Again, it is growing; additions are made in its many departments every day; the worlds we conquer carry us forward to see fresh worlds in advance to master; and so we are ever moving, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, changing our relations to all things around us, but still on the whole gaining. Revelation is perfect. It has no mistakes. Man may make mistakes about it, and misunderstand it, and misinterpret it, but none the less it has no errors in itself. It is progressive, because God saw fit, "*at sundry times and in divers manners to speak in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, and in these last days unto us by His Son*"; but at each stage what is made known by the divine will is entirely free from error. It may be said to be incomplete, in the sense that it is not complete until the whole is given; but otherwise it is, as far as it goes, absolutely true. Now that God has spoken in these last days to us by His Son, the Word Incarnate has told us all we are permitted to know until the restitution of all things. Again, science in its advance carries us forward on the same plane. We always keep on the same level. All the discoveries, and inventions, and accessions to human knowledge which have been made have not lifted us one hair's breadth to see any further into the future, or deeper into the mysteries of our being, or the problems of existence. Of what avail are the Copernican system, or the electric telegraph, or the utilization of steam in commerce and manufactures, to meet the inquiries, How shall the soul be cleansed from guilt? If a man die, shall he live again? How shall a man make his peace with God? As regards these questions, and such as these, all the accumulations of human knowledge leave us just where they found us. Revelation, on the other hand, lifts us up to a higher level; it enlarges our horizon, it tells us things which we could not know of ourselves, and find out by ourselves. It is entirely consistent with all we know and learn besides from other sources of information, but still it is

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above all mere human knowledge, and places us at last on the Mount of Ascension to see our nature in the Person of JESUS CHRIST going up into Heaven, and to hear the warning that He will come again to judge us at the last great day. Side by side are science and revelation not opposed, but in perfect agreement, except in so far as man has woven his mistakes into the one, or read his mistakes into the other, and then at these points they seem to be at variance, but in reality it is not so. As time passes errors are corrected in human guesses after truth, and misapprehensions are removed about God's Book of Life, and where once discord was thought to exist there is found the most perfect harmony. This has been repeated a hundred times in the past, and who, that has faith as a grain of mustard-seed, can fail to believe that the ebb and flow of human knowledge, as it marks its uncertain and irregular advance in the chronicles of the ages, will be found to be more and more in agreement with God's fixed and immutable truth, as displayed on the pages of revelation, until no one, whose opinion is worthy of account, will hesitate to ascribe any discrepancies which may appear to exist to their true and legitimate cause, the imperfection of human knowledge. Science, at every point, and in every department, has its votaries, its busy devotees, who rest not in their eager search after truth; every fresh discovery but whets the appetite for more, and while it quickens the industry and kindles the enthusiasm of those already at work, it summons to the field of noble endeavour hosts of new recruits. This is well. The field of nature in its broadest acceptation is exhaustless. The more we learn from her, and know about her, the better; we rejoice to add field after field to our area of scientific conquest. We welcome the sturdy labourers on her highways of inquiry; the brave athletes who grapple with her problems of difficulty, the generous benefactors who forego ease and comfort, yea, even health and life itself, that they may lay the trophies of discovery and invention at our feet, we bid them God-speed. There is room for them, and a thousand times as many besides, and there will be unto the end. But this activity in scientific research and metaphysical speculation has its dangers, which will do harm, unless it is checked by correctives which will restore the equilibrium, and give to man's inner being, the depths of the soul, the nutriment which it craves and needs. The work which follows, and to which these few lines, written necessarily in haste under the pressure of many duties, are an introduction, supplies such a corrective. It does so, if its designs be carried out, to a much larger extent than might be inferred from the publication and sale of a volume. The author hopes that his materials will not only be used in private, but will find their way into sermons and instructions, and form in hundreds, who may never see the book, the habit of approaching Holy Scripture in the spirit of meditation. A busy, restless age needs this antidote so much. Meditation, the calm contem-

plation of God's words and works, and ways in revelation, ministers the balm to the soul which soothes its irritation, it lifts the mind above the dust and din of material things to discern spiritual realities. Who does not suppose that St. Paul was a different man after he had been caught up into the third heaven? It was not so difficult for him afterwards to be in the world, and yet not of it. Meditation does something of this sort for those who practise it, and they return from their celestial flight and sojourn braced for the duties of life, and ready "to reckon," with the Apostle, "*the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" It must needs be that in this age we must be in a whirl, that material interests and secular affairs must rise like a flood-tide around us, and unless we are on our guard drift us unconsciously far away from the eternal shore, whose outlines we knew in infancy and childhood when we said our prayers, and learned our Bible lessons, and recited our catechism, and insulate us amid the waves of this troublesome world. Meditation is precisely the check which will counteract this ruinous tendency. It takes the mind off from this world and fixes it in contemplation upon the next. For a season, it cannot be long, for we are too weak to endure the strain, it gives wings to the soul, and it rises in flight to those higher regions where earthly things fade away from view, and the infinities, which are always around us, emerge, and we are with GOD, and CHRIST, and the Saints at rest, and spiritual realities. When we descend and enter again the shop, the counting-house, the factory, the lawyer's office, when we take up again the burden of life, whatever it may be, we are different beings from what we were; we have been upon the lofty elevations, we have caught glimpses of magnificent prospects, and ever and anon we lift our eyes to the hills from whence cometh our help. We have been upon their brow, and with Moses from Mount Pisgah we have seen stretching far away the land of promise, the land that floweth with milk and honey, our country, our lovely and eternal home. It would be well for our people if they would utilize the few Saints' days which our Calendar gives us as special seasons of meditation. Once each month in that event they would climb the mountain with St. Andrew, or St. Thomas, or St. Stephen, or the Innocents as guides and companions, and look off, by their help under God, to the pleasant land where the Patriarchs, and Apostles, and Confessors, and Martyrs have their habitation. This would supply a simple rule for stated periods of meditation, and give them opportunities at regularly recurring intervals of renewing their spiritual strength in the companionship and surroundings of holy men, and women and children, whose souls are with GOD, and whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. Then let them take such a work as the present for daily use as occasion offers and opportunity is supplied for being alone with GOD and one's own soul. The Bible is the great store-house of food for meditation, its resources are inexhaustible. Generation after

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generation has fed upon the bounty of the earth, and still its fields are as fruitful and its supplies as generous as at first ; so Holy Scripture has opened its fountains and granaries to every applicant through all the centuries, and none have gone empty away unless they chose, and yet its store of good things like the woman's barrel of meal and cruse of oil has not wasted. The essential elements of physical nutriment are few and simple, and under various combinations give us the pleasing variety which promotes health and yields us unceasing pleasure. Corn and wine, and oil, and water, and fruit and flesh form the staple of man's food, and he never wearies of eating and drinking to allay the cravings of hunger and thirst. We are met with the same economy in God's arrangements for the sustentation of the soul ; the verities of the Scripture are few and simple, indeed they may be all in the last analysis reduced to one, our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He reveals the Father ; through Him and at His intercession the Holy Spirit comes ; the Church is His Body, and the Sacraments are from Him, His gifts, and unite us to Him ; He is the resurrection and the life. He is the Judge of the quick and the dead ; and He is the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world, and whom the redeemed will follow in heaven whithersoever He goeth. CHRIST is the Sun of Holy Scripture, the source of its light which illumines us, and of its heat which warms us. In Genesis He appears in creation, for by Him were all things made ; He is the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. In the Revelation of St. John He is the Alpha and Omega, the One who testifieth of things to come, and whom the beloved Disciple calls by name as he closes the inspired volume with the prayer, "Even so, come LORD JESUS." And all along in history, prophecy, type, parable, miracle, psalms, gospel, epistle, He is the central figure, and, as might have been expected, what is nearest to Him and most nearly concerns Him appears in due proportion in the pages of the Bible. His Church, which is His Body, His Sacraments, His Cross, His Passion, His Resurrection, His Ascension, His Session at the right hand of the Eternal Father, all these things, and such as these, because they are especially His, are constantly brought before us in Holy Scripture. It is true that some perhaps have seen these things where they are not, but it is safer and better to see our LORD and His nearest and dearest associates where they may not be than to fail to discern them where they are. I would much rather, with Apostolic men and the ancient Fathers, see CHRIST almost everywhere, than with many a modern commentator do my best to see Him nowhere. We must not be surprised, then, when we find that those who, with St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom, recognize our LORD as the soul, the life of Holy Scripture, discern the one act of worship which He instituted, and which He commanded as of perpetual obligation under the most solemn sanctions, and amid the most tender and touching circumstances, as next in importance to Himself, suggested

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and referred to most frequently in the Bible. The language which our Saviour employed to describe the Holy Eucharist, "*His Body and His Blood*," the effect which He emphatically declared would follow the devout reception of this heavenly and spiritual food, "*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood DWELLETH in Me and I in him*," points unmistakably to an association so intimate and close between our LORD and the Holy Communion as to seem to justify those who expect to discover, and are persuaded that they do discover It very frequently in the pages of inspiration, next in frequency, indeed, to the presence of CHRIST Himself. The work which follows is not a work of controversy. It is the result of painstaking research, of patient toil for the Divine Master's sake. It was undertaken, and carried forward, and completed in the spirit of love to GOD and love to man, and may He Who bade us love one another make its true teaching fruitful in the nutriment and salvation of souls.

GEORGE F. SEYMOUR,

Bishop of Springfield.

NEW YORK, August 12th, 1881.

INSTRUCTION ON MEDITATION.

THE Means of grace which, next to the Sacraments, bears most fruit in a spiritual life, and, therefore, is most important, is Meditation; that is, the exercise of the three principal powers of the soul, the Memory, the Intellect, and the Will, in the contemplation of Divine Truth; and although it is often difficult, and apparently ineffective, nothing can possibly take its place, or justify its omission.

Meditation has many results, but only one real *end*. For instance, it enables us to speak of Divine Truth with deeper intelligence, and so to teach others; it helps us to engage in our devotions with greater fervour; it supplies us with a reason for avoiding sin, for resisting temptation, for enduring patiently our trials; and yet none of these can be said to be the true *end* of Meditation. No; the true reason why we should meditate is that in Meditation we have fellowship with God, we are caught up, as it were, into heaven, we drink in the divine life, we bask in God's light, we revel in God's love, we rest in God—this is the *end* of Meditation. And the realization of this end must make us very indifferent about the means by which it is to be reached, whether by coldness and distractions, patiently endured, or by ecstatic joy. The essentials to a good meditation are not brilliant thoughts, but faithful efforts; not a vivid imagination, but a loving heart; not a profound intellect, but a patient spirit.

Meditation differs from the Study of God's Word, in that, in Study, the intellect is *active*, and investigates truth, using all the appliances within its reach in doing so; but, in Meditation, the intellect is rather *passive*, it listens for the Voice of God, using only its kindred faculties, the memory, the will, &c. Study supplies the food, which Meditation digests; in Study, the intellect gathers the material, which the soul, by Meditation, assimilates to itself, and grasps as its own. The exercise of the intellect, in Study, may lead us to theological *conclusions*; Meditation only can bring us to religious *convictions*. For the former we may be willing to contend; for the latter we ought to be ready, if need be, to die.

In Meditation the Ear must teach the Eye. We listen for the Voice of God, unstopping the ear of our soul by penitence, tuning it by the exercise of Meditation, that we may catch the faintest whispers of that Voice; and gazing up to God, until our spiritual Eye seems to pierce the clouds of earth, and we see those things of which we have first heard. The Voice of God is a Living Voice, that is, it is always speaking; not as in the thunders of Sinai, but at

first a still small Voice, gradually increasing in distinctness, as we train ourselves to listen, till at last it thrills our whole being, and every faculty of our nature vibrates in response.

Some people think they are not constituted so as to be able to meditate, but it is not any special character of intellect that is suited to Meditation ; but, as in the performance of some grand piece of sacred music, there are, in the orchestra, many instruments of different capacity and power, and yet all are needful to the general effect—some with a limited scale, able to produce but a few notes, others able to execute the most intricate passages, and yet each necessary for the production, in all its symmetry, of the great conception of the Author's mind—so, in Meditation, we are being prepared to take our place before the Throne, in the eternal utterance of the new song of heaven ; and though our intellects, and therefore our meditations, may differ, this very difference is necessary for the production of harmony ; and while some, in their meditations, may seem to produce, so to speak, but few notes, those sounds are as necessary for the execution of the Author's purpose as the greater volume of sound which proceeds from the larger instrument.

There have been some whose meditation has been so real that they have been caught up to heaven in their meditation. They may have been but few, but we know of one, S. Paul, who was so transported, and who tells us that he heard "*unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter.*" And the last Book in the Bible is the description of what S. John saw and heard when he "*was in the Spirit on the LORD's Day.*"

Meditation, too, is necessary as the fuel of hope. The man of business meditates deeply on the ventures in which he is engaged ; he brings to bear upon them the powers of his memory, intellect, and will—his memory recalling the experience stored up in the past, his intellect considering the matter in all its bearings, and his will making the decision on which he acts. As he meditates entirely on the things of this world, so his hopes are engrossed by the successes and rewards of this world ; so, if we meditate on the things of eternity, our hopes will be fixed on those things beyond the grave, and in proportion as we, by Meditation, supply fuel, will our hopes of heaven burn brightly.

Every sin we commit is a sin against hope, choosing present gratification instead of future beatitude. We sin so often, and so easily, because our hope is so dead ; and the cause of this is that we do not feed it by Meditation ; but when the light of hope burns bright, the things of this world are thrown in the shade, and lose their power over us. S. John amid the barren rocks of Patmos saw the glories of heaven, and the Face of the Beloved of his soul ; and we, too, in our exile, amid the rocks of this world, must strive so to gaze up in Meditation that, through that ever-open Door (Rev., iv., 1), we may see something of the glories of our Home.

Many complain that their lives are lives of such worry and distraction that they cannot meditate, and are content to cry, in hopeless weariness, "*O that I HAD wings like a dove : for then would I flee away, and be at rest*"; and they forget that they *have* the wings of THE DOVE, the HOLY GHOST, and in Meditation *can* use these wings; and the very cares of this life should only drive them the more, in Meditation, to turn away for awhile from the changing scenes of earth, and rest in the contemplation of God.

The measure of our beatitude in eternity will depend upon the measure of our capacity for apprehending the things of God, and this must largely depend upon the development of the powers of our soul by Meditation. The children of God, this world is the school in which we are being educated to take our place for ever in another country. Much of the happiness and prosperity of our future depends on the facility with which we can speak and understand the language of that country, and on our familiarity with the manners and customs of its people. In Meditation we are taught, so to speak, the language of heaven, the language in which God speaks to us now and tells us of that fair land, where is our own true Home. And as in learning a language it is necessary first to master the rules of its grammar, although, when these are acquired, we apply them without effort in conversation, so, though Meditation is the freest intercourse of the soul with God, it has to be learnt by patient attention to a system at first.

In the following Instruction many of the rules recommended in Meditation are omitted, as serving, in the present day, rather to embarrass than to help the learner; and only such rules are given as are more or less used in every systematic meditation. The learner is advised in the beginning so thoroughly to familiarize himself with them, that he may be able to apply them without conscious effort. Avoiding then, as much as possible, technical terms, we may divide our subject into three parts. I. The Preparation; II. The Meditation; III. The Conclusion.

I. The Preparation :

i. The *general* preparation must be an earnest desire for perfection in God's service. It is worse than useless to meditate, if we do not intend to try to carry out the holy inspirations and counsels, which come to us from God in our meditation. We must be in earnest in our desire to obey the Voice of God, and hence we must endeavour to keep ourselves habitually recollected, and watchful against sin.

ii. The *particular* preparation will be to select our subject and to divide it up under a few heads or points. This should be done at least the day before our meditation; and it is often a good plan to spend a few hours in preparing a course of subjects, enough to last perhaps for a month, so that we may not lose time each day in choosing a subject. As every act of our LORD'S Life is a

law to which we are to conform our lives, so the Life of our LORD will supply us with the best subjects for meditation ; besides this we have the whole of the Bible from which to draw.

In preparing the subject it is not necessary to spend much time in arranging the points in a strictly logical sequence ; any simple division, which breaks up the subject, is sufficient. The aim of this Book is to supply subjects, ready arranged ; and after a time we may use the same matter again for meditation.

iii. When we come to the actual time of meditation we must engage with earnestness in the *moral* preparation ; which is, as it were, the tuning of the chords of our soul that they may be played upon by the Hand of God. Most of the fruitless meditations are the result of the neglect or careless performance of this moral preparation. In this work some have found it useful to make these five acts :

(1) An act of the realization of God's Presence ; this is absolutely essential, and should be made with great care and reality.

(2) An act of Contrition for all our sins generally, but especially for any one, which we feel will hinder our meditation.

(3) An act of Oblation ; offering ourselves to God, and promising obedience to His Voice in whatever He commands us.

(4) An act of Resignation ; to endure with patience, if it be God's Will, coldness and distraction in our meditation, remembering that this discipline is often more really beneficial to us than a rapturous meditation, that the goodness of a meditation is to be estimated, not by the brilliancy of our thoughts, but by the faithfulness of our efforts.

(5) An act of Invocation of the HOLY GHOST ; concluding with, or sometimes consisting of, the hymn *Veni Creator*. As meditation is the work of the HOLY GHOST, for "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by HIS SPIRIT : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,*" I. Cor., ii., 9-10 ; so this Invocation of the HOLY GHOST is an essential part of the preparation for each meditation.

These Acts need not occupy more than two or three minutes ; they should not be restricted to any particular form of words, but should be the real expression of the soul, and sometimes we should dwell longer on one, sometimes on another, as we are drawn by our needs. The following examples show how this part of our preparation may be made :

(1) Realization of God's Presence ;—*O my God, I come into Thy Presence to listen to Thy Voice, to gaze on the glory of Thy Kingdom. Grant me, I pray Thee, the Spirit of Holy Fear, that realizing the awful Majesty of Thy Presence I may not sin by wilful consent to wandering or worldly thoughts.*

(2) Contrition ;—*O my God, Thou art All Holy, and I so sinful. Sincerely do I lament that I have so often offended Thee, my God and my all ; and especially do I pray Thee to pardon that sin (.), which, like a cloud, hides Thee from my sight and so hinders my power of meditation.*

(3) Oblation ;—*O my God, I offer myself now to Thee ; do with me what Thou wilt, take from me all that displeases Thee, send me what Thou seest to be best for me ; I give myself to Thee, to do Thy Will ; “ Speak, Lord ; for Thy servant heareth.”*

(4) Resignation ;—*O my God, into Thy Hands I commend myself. I resign myself in this meditation to coldness, distraction, or temptation ; for Thou knowest what is best for me ; only, I pray Thee, give me grace to be faithful in resisting, and patient in enduring the attacks of my foes.*

(5) Invocation ;—*O Holy Spirit, Eternal God, inflame my soul ; cleanse my memory, enlighten my intellect, kindle my affections, and strengthen my will : that I may make this meditation to the glory of God, and the sanctification of my own soul.*

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS.

COME, HOLY GHOST, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire ;
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed Unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love ;
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy Grace ;
Keep far our foes, give peace at home :
Where Thou art Guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of both to be but One ;
That through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song ;
Praise to Thy Eternal Merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

II. The Meditation :

i. Having finished this preparation, and having by it tuned our minds to the contemplation of Divine Truth ; we now begin the Meditation proper by making the First Prelude. In this, where possible (and throughout this work),

the imagination introduces the subject, by painting as vividly as possible a picture on which we can gaze at the beginning of the Meditation, and to which we can return whenever our thoughts begin to wander. This picture presents the scene of the Meditation to us, and we should fill in all the details, so as to make it as complete as we can.

ii. This being done, we pass to the Second Prelude, which is simply a short prayer, or collect, asking for some fruit, which we seek in this particular Meditation.

iii. We then take the points or divisions of the subject one by one, and apply to each three powers of the soul, (1) the Memory, (2) the Intellect, (3) and the Will.

(1) In exercising the memory, we ask ourselves, What do I remember about this? If an action, we may ask, Who is the Actor? What does He? Why, When, How does He thus act? If a speech, Who is the Speaker? To Whom, Why, When does He Speak?

(2) When the Memory has thus done its work in collecting matter, the Intellect proceeds to consider it. Thus we should ask, what have I to consider about this point? In its relation to revealed Truth, to daily life, as it affects myself personally?

(3) From this follows the exercise of the Will, which is twofold: (i) Affections, or great desire for the better things which have been suggested by the Intellect, and (ii) Resolutions, or determination to take some definite steps to obtain these things. We must be careful that all acts of the Will are real, that the affections are not mere sentimental wishes, and that the Resolutions are thoroughly practical. The best resolution, if we make daily Meditations, is one that may be carried out that day, and that bears directly upon the difficulties, or necessities of the day. Having thus brought the Memory, Intellect, and Will to bear upon the first point, when we have exhausted it, we should pass to the next point, which should be treated in the same manner; and so on till the end of the divisions of the subject is reached.

III. The Conclusion:

i. This should consist of colloquies, or prayerful addresses to One of the Persons of the Holy Trinity; expressing our gratitude for what God has done for us in the Meditation; asking for such things as the Meditation has shown us we especially need; and finally offering and commending ourselves entirely to God. Colloquies, and prayers may be introduced at all parts of the Meditation, as we may be drawn to them; and verses of the Psalms, thus used, are especially helpful in this part of the exercise.

ii. Then should follow a short examination as to how the Meditation has been performed. Whether the preparation has been carefully made, whether there has been a real struggle against distractions, etc.

iii. Finally we should briefly review the Meditation, recalling the principal Affections and Resolutions; and forming some one definite resolution, which we may go forth to carry out that day; and choosing some text of Holy Scripture, or prayer, which has occurred to us in the Meditation, and which we must endeavour to keep constantly on our lips, and in our mind, during the day; as a flower whose fragrance and beauty may remind us of the garden of Meditation in which it was plucked.

The whole may be concluded with the LORD'S Prayer, and Anima Christi.

ANIMA CHRISTI.

Soul of CHRIST sanctify me !
 Body of CHRIST save me !
 Blood of CHRIST inebriate me !
 Water from the side of CHRIST wash me !
 Passion of CHRIST strengthen me !
 O Good JESUS hear me !
 Within Thy Wounds hide me !
 And suffer me not to be separated from Thee !
 From the malignant enemy defend me !
 In the hour of my death call me !
 And place me near to Thee,
 That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,
 For ever and ever, Amen.

ADVENT SUNDAY.

CHRIST'S ADVENT IN HUMILITY AND IN GLORY.

"Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen"—Collect.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed LORD, first as a little Babe in the Manger at Bethlehem; then as the King of kings on His Judgment throne.

PRELUDE II.—The Collect for the day; pray for the spirit of fear and love, that you may rightly prepare in this life with joy to meet Him at His appearing.

ADVENT is a time of penitential preparation for Christmas, *i. e.*, for meeting JESUS CHRIST in our Christmas Communion, when He comes, still in great humility, to apply to our individual souls the benefits of His Incarnation. The Collect for the first Sunday in Advent gives us the key to our preparation.

I. It speaks of two Advents:

i. In great humility, ushered in by the angels' songs of peace: CHRIST, as a helpless child, appealing to our love.

ii. In glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, announced by the angel's trumpet summoning all: CHRIST appealing to our fear.

iii. As we meditate on these two Advents of our LORD, they must awaken in us fear and love. If we are prepared to meet Him in the one, we need not fear to meet Him in the other; if we can rightly meet Him at Christmas, when He comes to us in great humility under the forms of bread and wine—if we can make a good Communion, then we shall indeed be ready to meet Him, when He comes in glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead.

II. Fear and love, then, are the two feelings for Advent, and their result will be *Penitence*.

How often fear is the beginning of penitence: a fear awakened by the remembrance of our sins, and the thoughts of Death, Judgment, Hell, Eternity; and then, as we think of our LORD's love for us—the sufferings of His Life and Death, to take away our sins, His mercy in waiting for us and bearing with us so long, His full forgiveness always ours when we turn to Him—these considerations must melt our hearts into love for Him; and that love will perfect our penitence. As S. Augustine says, "The needle of fear must go before the thread of love"—the needle piercing the sinner's hard heart, Compunction; and then the thread of love gaining its entrance into that heart, Contrition; and as the needle is drawn out, leaving the thread behind to keep the work together, so "perfect love casteth out fear," and binds the work together, binds the soul to God with the cords of that love.

III. The result of this penitence is to be two-fold:

i. Casting away the works of darkness. } Both these are accomplished by the grace of
ii. Putting on the armour of light. } Absolution.

i. The soul in its penitence sorrowing, confessing, purposing amendment, is loosed from its sins, and thus the works of darkness are cast away.

ii. The robe of Baptismal purity, which had been lost by sin, is restored (for Absolution infuses its own grace into the soul, and restores all that has been forfeited), and this white robe, which has been washed in the Blood of the LAMB, is the Armour of Light, which, until the will yields, will be proof against all the attacks of Satan, and which, to the eyes of the spiritual world, is radiant with heavenly light.

Affections.—Resolve to examine yourself as to your sins in the light of CHRIST's Advent; make acts of fear and love; pray for grace of true contrition; resolve to prepare for Christmas Communion as though you were then to meet CHRIST on His Judgment Throne.

FIRST MONDAY IN ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.

"Now it is high time to awake out of sleep :.....the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—Rom , xiii., 11-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Augustine in tears of anguish in the little garden at Milan ; hearing the mysterious voice oft chanting the words " Take up and read " ; opening his book at this Epistle for Advent-Sunday ; reading these words ; and then, all the darkness in his heart vanishing away, giving himself to GOD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for light to see yourself as GOD sees you, that you may awake from the sleep of self-deception.

Compare the night of the world with the day of eternity !

I. Our life in this world is like a journey at night—over mountains, passing close to precipices, which, because of the darkness, we cannot see : darkness is the great feature of night, and of this world—darkness and unreality. As we dream at night, and awake to find it all unreal, so in this life we dream that we are what we are not—we build castles which the dawning day, alas, will disperse. One instance now : the darkness of intellect—ignorance :

- i. As to others, always making mistakes about the hearts of others.
- ii. As to ourselves, thinking ourselves humble, truthful, &c., when the opposite.
- iii. As to GOD, looking upon those very crosses which are the proof of His love, as the opposite.

II. But this night of time is far spent, for all the day is at hand : the Day of the LORD cometh—therefore :

- i. Let us not care for the judgments of others about us, only think of GOD's judgment ; remember their ignorance of us is like our ignorance of them.
- ii. Think how little we know ourselves, and how thoroughly GOD knows us. This Advent try to make the former knowledge more like the latter.

III. Then cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light :

- i. Sins which we discover must be given up.
- ii. The armour of light, " the putting on the LORD JESUS CHRIST," for He is the true Light, He is our only armour.
- iii. Armour is uncomfortable to wear. Chain armour was worn in old time. Why ? Because people realized their constant danger ; not because it was pleasant. So our spiritual armour may be uncomfortable, but it is safe.

Affections.—Resolve to endure the restraints of this armour ; pray for strength to give yourself this year more to GOD ; prepare as though the Day of the LORD were indeed at hand.

FIRST TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

ADVENT COMFORT.

"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."—Rom., xiii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul in prison just before his death, realizing this text which he had before written, and writing "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

PRELUDE II.—Thank GOD for having brought you so far on your course, and pray for perseverance.

ADVENT, the beginning of another year, is a time for reflection ; for looking back on the road traversed ; for looking forward to the goal.

I. Since last Advent :

i. You have had calls, means of grace, opportunities offered. Have they been neglected, or rejected? This is especially an Advent text. Can you honestly say it as you look back? That though you have had many falls, you have advanced since you first began to serve CHRIST?—since last Advent?—and that you have never wilfully hardened your heart?

ii. Have you done any thing that will enable you to say this text? Have you taken any great step, which has, perhaps, cost you much? Some have. Many during the past year have had the call, and *heard* it, but not obeyed; conscience has been awakened, and has told them plainly what to do, but they have resisted; and so the needle will go on pricking, either until they listen and obey it, or, as is too often the case, it is blunted. How is it with you?

II. Comforting words these to those to whom they are true, but most awful to others—to those who know that the *end* is nearer, but that end is not their salvation. There are those who, as they look back, remember a time when they were nearer to GOD than now; when they thought more of Him, loved Him more, served Him better; when they frequented Sacraments that they have now given up. For them it should read, "Our condemnation is nearer." Privileges are responsibilities, and if not persevered in, our condemnation. (Heb., x., 38-39; II. Peter, ii., 21.) How is it with you?

III. How comforting this text to some. Many years since you believed—years of fighting, running; now the crown is nearer, the goal closer! Some will be able to *feel* this text for the first time this Advent; some to say it with more fervour each day of their life as it passes. Will you?

Affections.—Resolve to press forward this year; to cultivate the habit of looking forward to CHRIST's second Advent; try to pray S. John's prayer, "Even so come, LORD JESUS."

FIRST WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

"When they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto Me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them."—S. Matt., xxi, 1-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD waiting outside of Jerusalem for the two disciples to bring the colt to Him, that on it He might enter the city in triumph.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may form part of that great Procession in which at the last JESUS and the Saints enter Jerusalem the Golden.

I. Consider how the condition of each individual before being brought to CHRIST is like that of this colt:

i. *"Whereon never man sat."*—S. Mark, xi., 2. Untamed, obstinate by nature, recognizing no master but his own inclinations, no law but self-will.

ii. And yet *"tied,"* by the chain of evil habits, each act a link of that chain, while boasting of his freedom, the slave of Satan. As the Collect says, *"tied and bound with the chain of our sins."*

iii. *"By the door without in a place where two ways met."*—S. Mark, xi., 4. Outside the door of Paradise by Adam's sin; outside the Church of CHRIST, the Kingdom of Heaven, by his own sin, either of ignorance or wilfulness. Life has been described as a journey where two ways meet at every step, the narrow and the broad way.

II. Consider the command of CHRIST, the law of Apostolic work. He sent forth His Apostles, His Church, to bring man to Him:

i. *"Loose them."* From what? From all that holds man back from CHRIST; from his sins, by the power of the Sacraments; from all the cords which draw man to earth, by the preaching of the Gospel, setting before him the eternal glories of heaven in contrast to the passing glitter of the world.

ii. *"And bring them unto me."* The work of the Church is to bring souls to CHRIST. The work of each Priest, sent out like these Apostles, is not to win hearts to himself, but to bring souls to CHRIST. The danger of mistaking one for the other, outward success for inward sanctity.

III. Consider the cause of Apostolic work. *"The Lord hath need of them."*

i. The dignity of man. That He, Who is Creator and Possessor of all, should need man. Think of CHRIST waiting, as He waited outside of Jerusalem for the colt, all the Saints and Angels, all Heaven, waiting for you to be brought to CHRIST before the glorious end can come.

ii. Why did He need him? That the colt might be the throne on which He might enter Jerusalem in triumph amid the hosannas of the multitude. So CHRIST needs you, that, loosed from all bonds, you may be the triumphal throne on which He may reign, when He enters the Kingdom of His Glory at the last, amid the alleluias of the company of heaven. *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne."*—Rev., iii., 21. Observe, "in," not "upon." He in us and we in Him then shall reign.

Affections.—Resolve willingly to allow yourself to be brought to CHRIST now; to take every step to be loosed from all that holds you back from Him; no longer to stand outside, at the cross-roads, but bravely to enter the strait gate, and to tread the narrow way.

FIRST THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

JESUS OUR KING.

"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass..... Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."—S. Matt., xxi, 5-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the triumphal entry of our LORD into Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be more faithful to Him than those who then shouted Hosanna.

I. Consider the entry of our LORD into Jerusalem as a figure of His entry into your soul in each Communion:

i. He came as its King; so each Communion is the entry of a Sovereign into His Kingdom, your soul—purchased at what a cost!

ii. How He had loved that City, and by His teaching and miracles striven to prepare them for His reception; so has He loved your soul, and by His Voice, in the Bible, in the Church, and in your own conscience, has endeavoured to prepare it.

iii. They received Him with manifestations of joy and shouts of Hosanna; how like our feelings at the very time of Communion; how often we have said these very words!

iv. A few days after they drove Him forth to be crucified; how often have you, soon after your Communion, yielded to some temptation, which has driven CHRIST from your heart, crucified Him afresh!

v. What caused this change? A traitor in His Kingdom, Judas. His enemies could do nothing till one of His own betrayed Him. What is the Judas in your heart, what the ruling passion in league with CHRIST's enemies to crucify Him? You need fear no temptations from without if all is loyal within.

II. Consider the humble means our LORD chose for His entry as a King, the ass; so, in the Holy Eucharist, the humble elements of Bread and Wine, through which He enters to take possession of your soul:

i. And yet the humble means was prepared with reverent care; the garments stripped off themselves, the palm-boughs which they climbed the trees to get; so our altars vested; and flowers, the offering of reverent love; a humble throne, but our best.

ii. Consider the danger of lavishing your care on that which merely adds to the *material* beauty of the Celebration, while you are neglecting the beauty of holiness within yourself. What garment can you strip off, what palm-bough, the symbol of victory over self, can you gain, to lay at JESUS' Feet?

Affections.—Pray that you may ever recognize JESUS as your King; resolve to prepare the kingdom of your heart for His reception, and to watch lest you betray Him.

FIRST FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

DEATH.

"It is appointed unto men once to die."—Heb., ix., 27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a new-born child sleeping peacefully in its cradle ; consider the countless possibilities of its life, and yet only one event which is a certainty—it will die. The beginning of its life foreshadows the end ; the cradle of sleeping childhood, the cradle of the quiet grave.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a good death.

I. Consider some of the laws of death :

i. Its certainty : not a matter of faith, but of experience.
ii. Its uncertainty : the most uncertain event as to time, place and manner.
iii. Its universality : not only for all men, but for all things around man. The crumbling ruins of the historic buildings of the past, the glorious tints of the Autumn foliage, as well as the hectic colour of consumption's victim, all owe their beauty and interest to death.

iv. Its continuity : "*I die daily.*" Every breath, every movement causes waste ; you, and all around you, are ever dying.

v. Its solemnity : because only *once* ; if we make a mistake about it, it is irrevocable ; because it is an unknown experience to each ; those who have seen most die have no idea what it will be like when their turn comes.

II. What depends on death ? Everything in eternity. Compare the death of the sinner and the saint.

III. Consider the preparation for death :

i. Life is like a school in which we have to learn one science, to die well ; and our school-days are none too long to learn this.

ii What can you do to prepare ?

(a.) Learn to conquer your besetting sin *now*. Judas did not, and it caused his ruin.

(b.) Learn to know GOD *now* ; by the study of His Word, by living in the consciousness of His Presence, and by listening to the teachings of His Church.

(c.) Learn to receive the Sacraments with right dispositions *now*.

iii. Make a meditation on your own death-bed, and consider what you would desire to do then, and do that *now*.

Affections.—Make an act of resignation to God's will, as to the time and manner of your death ; thank GOD for having preserved you so long, and for having led you to realize the solemnity of death ; ask GOD to help you rightly to prepare for it ; resolve on the last day of each month, or year, to examine whether you are ready to die, and to make special preparation for death.

FIRST SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

"And Jesus went into the Temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."—S. Matt., xxi., 12-13.

PRELUDE. I.—Contemplate JESUS driving out all that profaned the Temple.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of true penitence.

I. Consider Creation as the great Temple of the LORD, perfect in the beauty of its architectural structure, waiting for the coming of its LORD in the Incarnation; as the Temple of Jerusalem, in all the glory of its splendid adornment, waited for the coming of its LORD at the Presentation; and consider the similarity of their condition when JESUS came, as shown in the text—the perfection of beauty in its material structure, but man profaning it:

i. By worldliness: "Buying and selling." So at our LORD's Advent, the civilized world had learned every form of worldly sin and dishonesty.

ii. By sensuality: "*Carrying vessels through it.*"—S. Mark, xi, 16. Every passion suffered to pass unchallenged and unchecked; the immorality of the age.

iii. By idolatry: The devil had stolen men's hearts from the worship of the Creator to the worship of the creature; the house of prayer had become the den of thieves.

II. Consider our LORD coming into your Parish Church at the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. What does He see? External reverence, perhaps, and beauty of architecture; but in the hearts of the worshippers during the service, in your heart:

i. What worldliness! making plans of worldly work, "buying and selling"

ii. What evil thoughts, passing unchecked through your mind!

iii. What empty words of prayer, from which the devil has stolen the life, the spirit of prayer!

III. Consider our LORD coming into your soul in your Communion. What does He find? Beauty of created excellence, created in the image of GOD, but:

i. Marred by how much love of the world, and the ways of the world!

ii. Defiled by the passage of what passions, and self-indulgence!

iii. Hardened by what neglect of prayer, for the devil's special work is to hinder prayer!

IV. Consider the remedy:

i. Zeal (S. John, ii., 17), the motive. ii. Self-discipline, the scourge (S. John, ii., 15), the means. iii. Purity, the Presence of JESUS, the result.

Affections.—Examine yourself by your three-fold Baptismal vow; resolve to give up some special sinful habit, and to make a special preparation for your next Communion.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

CHRIST'S ADVENT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."—Rom., xv., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Peter, girded with his fisher's coat, casting himself into the sea to come to CHRIST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, having girded yourself with the habit of diligent and prayerful study, you may, in the ocean of God's revealed Truth, find CHRIST everywhere, to the joy and comfort of your soul.

I. Remember that the Scriptures referred to so constantly by CHRIST and His Apostles (S. John, v., 39 ; Acts, xvii., 2-11, &c.) are the Scriptures of the Old Testament ; and that both our LORD and the writers of the New Testament teach that their true law of interpretation is as figures of CHRIST, and of ourselves (I. Cor., x., 11, &c.) ; so consider the Old Testament :

i. As the history of sin and Redemption from sin. Two chapters relate to man's creation and innocence ; the rest is the history of his fall, and gradual restoration.

ii. As exhibiting in the different Books the several stages of God's work in the soul ; *e. g.*, Genesis, the soul's fall in Adam, its call and conversion in Abraham, and fall into the captivity of actual sin in Egypt ; Exodus, escape from its sins through the Red Sea of the Precious Blood ; Leviticus, access to God through the Sacraments and services of the Sanctuary ; Numbers, pilgrimage ; Deuteronomy, rules of life ; Joshua, self-conquest, driving out the evil habits which have settled in the land of the heart ; Judges, failure through not avoiding occasions of sin, and various means of overcoming temptation ; Ruth, the life of Communion ; Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, vicissitudes of the soul's life ; Ezra and Nehemiah, reformation after periods of carelessness and neglect, &c.

iii. As giving us in type various aspects of CHRIST's life and work.

iv. As exhibiting, in the characters of Its heroes, our failings and dangers, our duties and blessings.

II. Consider Its Author is the Holy Ghost—therefore :

i. No word accidental ; each to be considered.

ii. All written for our learning ; no part to be left unread.

iii. Must be interpreted by the help and light of the Holy Ghost, and not merely by natural faculties.

III. Remember It is the Voice of God to the soul—therefore :

i. Reverence in reading It, and speaking of It.

ii. Diligence in studying It, that we may hear what God has to say to us.

iii. Responsibility for learning all we can of God from His revelation *now*, in preparation for spending eternity with God hereafter.

Affections.—Resolve to begin the reading or study of the Bible always with prayer ; to have a rule about your Bible reading ; to apply what you read to yourself ; thank God for having given you so priceless a treasure.

SECOND MONDAY IN ADVENT.

HOPE.

"Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—Rom, xv., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Angels before the Incarnation, hearing the Voice of GOD, but gazing into infinity in vain, and waiting and hoping for GOD to reveal Himself to their sight.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the virtue of holy hope.

I. Consider the position of Hope as the intermediate virtue :

i. Between Faith and Love, not by arbitrary position, but the necessary connecting link ; we must believe, before we can hope for what we believe ; we must desire it and hope for it, before we can love it.

ii. Between presumption and despair, the neglect of hope as a theological virtue, has produced Calvinism.

iii. As the special virtue of Paradise ; "prisoners of hope" in the intermediate state.

iv. The safeguard against the two great dangers, into one of which all the lost fall.

(a.) Presumption or spiritual pride, thinking ourselves safe when we are not.

(b.) Despair or spiritual sloth, thinking it useless to struggle any longer.

II. Consider that the neglect of the exercise of Hope has been the cause of most sins :

i. The fallen Angels were not content to wait and *hope* for the revelation of their King, but they cast away GOD's promise in the future, to gratify self in the present ; they worshipped their own perfections, were content with natural gifts, found their joy in the present, and so lost that for which they were created, and which it was the law of their being to hope for, GOD. Their sin was against Hope.

ii. Consider the sin of Adam. Eden was beautiful, but it was not his Home ; he was to look forward to some further revelation of GOD connected with his translation to another world ; he was to wait and *hope* ; in the tree of knowledge he saw the possibility of possessing at once that mysterious knowledge GOD was to reveal, and so he sinned against the law of hope.

iii. Is it not so with mankind now ? Instead of hoping for "*the glory that shall be revealed*" in another world, instead of placing all our hopes beyond the grave, the temptation is to fix our hearts on the possession of things in the present ; almost every sin is against hope, for it is a giving up future beatitude for present enjoyment.

III. We are to abound in Hope through the power of the Holy Ghost ; Faith, Hope, Love, all are His gifts.

Affections.—Invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit ; resolve to exercise your faith by hoping for the promises of GOD ; pray that you may see the transitoriness of all here, and so, holding back from what the world offers as a temporary possession, may attain to the eternal inheritance of that for which you hope.

SECOND TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

MEDITATION THE FUEL OF HOPE.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope."—Rom., xv, 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the B. V. Mary, with SS. Joseph, Zacharias, Simon, Elizabeth, Anna, and other holy souls, meditating on the prophecies of the Messiah, and, while the world around was in hopeless darkness, having their hopes thus kindled into faithful and loving expectation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit in meditating on the Scriptures.

I. Consider the need of supplying fuel for our hope :

- i. How soon it dies when the object is not kept before our thoughts.
- ii. How it burns up, and seems to bring the object nearer, in proportion as it occupies our mind.
- iii. How every fresh detail we learn, concerning the object of our hopes, increases them, and fans them, as it were, into a bright flame.

II. Consider that the Holy Scriptures are entirely occupied with the subject of our hopes :

- i. When we neglect their study, the things of the present world engross our attention, and lead us to forget our hopes.
- ii. Each fresh detail of the promises of the future, which we gather from meditation, quickens our hope, making us long for what is promised.
- iii. The Scriptures contrast the eternal glory of our future joys with the passing nature of present interests, and so teach us to put aside all that can interfere with the growth of heavenly hope.

III. Remember that it is not mere reading of the Scriptures, but meditation on them, which will do this :

- i. Reading gives us a mere intellectual grasp of Truth ; meditation enables us to lay hold of it with our whole moral being.
- ii. The results of reading pass away, like other knowledge we have acquired ; that truth which we have made our own by meditation should become so part of us as to abide with us.
- iii. Meditation presents the things of heaven to the very eye of our soul, and so gives them reality. We look through the open Door, as S. John did, and are shown "*things which must be hereafter.*"—Rev., iv., 1.

IV. Consider what meditation is :

- i. The language in which God speaks to us. How patient we should be in learning it !
- ii. The Voice of God, revealing to us eternal Truth ; the Word of God, not only speaking to us, but in us, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. How we should value each opportunity !
- iii. The exercise of the gift of the Holy Ghost according to the promise (S. John, xvi., 13-14 ; I. Cor., ii., 10-14), and so thus in the consolation of the Scriptures "*we may abound in Hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*" How frequent and regular our meditations should be !

Affections.—Resolve to have a fixed rule for meditation, and to prepare for it carefully ; often to recall the aspirations which the Holy Ghost has awakened in your soul in meditation ; earnestly pray for the help of the Holy Ghost.

SECOND WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment."—Heb., ix., 27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the death-bed of the rich man in S. Luke, xvi, surrounded by all that wealth could give of comforts and luxuries; his friends, perhaps, praising his generosity, his cultured taste; his relations mourning over his body; his *soul* before the judgment-seat of CHRIST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so judge yourself now that you may have a merciful judgment then.

Holy Scripture puts before us two aspects of the Judgment: one at the moment of death, which decides the soul's eternity; the other at the last day, which manifests, before the whole world, the Justice of God.

I. Consider now the Particular Judgment of the *soul*:

- i. When? At the moment of death, while your friends are saying, Does he breathe?
- ii. Where? Probably in the place where you die, perhaps in the very room in which many of your sins have been committed.
- iii. The Court. JESUS CHRIST the Judge, the devil the accuser, and your Guardian Angel the witness.

II. Consider the Accusation:

- i. How thorough. The devil will read, as from a scroll, your life—thoughts, words, deeds, even motives of good actions; you kept a careless account, he has not overlooked one sin; and then, means of grace, opportunities, unused or misused.
- ii. Your Guardian Angel will say, It is true; those sins you really repented of will be struck off the scroll; but the rest, what are they?
- iii. Drowning men have told of a light flashing in their eyes, and their whole life before them. This is the particular judgment; not only a few great sins, but your daily life.

III. Consider the sentence. To go to be with the rich man in torments of soul; and to look forward to the General Judgment, only to receive again your body, the instrument of so many of your sins, that it, too, may have its punishment:

- i. It is final; no court of appeal.
- ii. It is just; you will have to acknowledge that.
- iii. It was my own fault; you will remember, perhaps, this meditation.

Affections.—Resolve to be very careful in self-examination, very sincere in penitence; pray for light to see your life as God sees it, and for grace of true contrition; thank God for every call, and warning.

SECOND THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

JESUS, THE EXILE.

"Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall: and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."—II. Kings, iv, 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, as a homeless Wayfarer, dependent on the ministrations of His friends; both when on earth, and now in the Blessed Sacrament.

PRELUDE II.—Read II. Kings, iv., 8-18, and pray that you may have grace to minister to CHRIST in His Exile, that in your heart He may find a Home.

I. Consider this incident as a type of the Holy Eucharist:

i. "*She constrained him to eat bread*"; constraint of our first Communion; our LORD loves this constraint; "*the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*"; does love of Him constrain us? love of us constrains Him to leave Heaven to eat Bread with us; in the Incarnation, in the B. Sacrament?

ii. "*Bread*"; the Bread of Life. (S. John, vi.)

iii. "*As oft as He passed by*"; regular Communion; how often the door is closed against Him when He passes by!

II. Consider the woman's advice to her husband:

i. "*An holy man of God*"; the Holy One of GOD.

ii. "*Which passeth by us continually*"; daily, if we will.

iii. "*Let us make a little chamber on the wall*"; prepare our hearts for the life of Communion, to be indeed the Home of JESUS in His exile here.

iv. What is the preparation of heart, the furniture?

(a.) A Bed; for He hath not where to lay His head; how many hearts where it is so;—where He may sleep, as in the boat, till we awake Him to still the storms around us, with His "*Peace, be still*"!

(b.) A Table; always ready for that day when He says, "*I will keep the Passover at Thy house.*"

(c.) A Stool; a humble throne, where He may sit and teach you all things.

(d.) A Candlestick; ourselves, for He is the Candle, the Light of the world.

III. Consider the woman's reward;

i. "*What is to be done for thee?*" Ask, fear not, or better still, like the woman, ask nothing, leave it to Him.

ii. A Son was given her; "*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*"

iii. Apply each of these titles to our LORD's work in us in the B. Sacrament.

Affections.—Pray for grace to prepare the Chamber for Him better; resolve to set it apart only for Him; thank Him for the privilege of ministering to Him in His exile; resolve to remember that your heart is His Home.

SECOND FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

"We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ."—Rom., xiv., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the great white Throne set up, the unerring books opened, the countless multitude assembled, and thyself standing before the Judge, alone!

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your sins may go before to judgment, to the Tribunal of Mercy *now*, and so may not follow you to the Judgment of that great day.

I. Consider some of the differences between this judgment of the last day, and the particular judgment of the soul at the moment of death:

i. A completeness in the General Judgment, which is wanting in the Particular.

(a.) The body will be there to be judged, as well as the soul.

(b.) The account will then be made up, the results of all your sins and good works; *e. g.*, Voltaire will have to meet all those whom his writings have ever drawn from the faith, all whom those men too have led astray. S. Stephen will see the results of his last prayer for his murderers, in S. Paul, and all whom his work and writings have helped to God, to the end of time; what a glorious result of one little prayer!

ii. Difference of details.

(a.) When? at the last day instead of the moment of death.

(b.) Where? before the great Throne of the Judge, before all people, Saints, angels, friends, enemies; all will be there; as all is read out, the mother will say, was that my child whom I thought so pure and good, was that her life?

iii. Difference of accusers; before, only one; now, many.

(a.) The devil, you will see him as he is, then, not as he made himself out to you in this world.

(b.) The guardian angels of other souls you ruined by your bad example or influence.

(c.) The priests of the Church, who ministered to you, who warned you of your danger, who implored you to repent.

(d.) Your own conscience, quickened by the light of that day, will accuse of everything, the opportunities, the means of grace, the calls you had—you will be your own accuser then, why not now?

II. What will be your defence?

i. Ignorance; but the Church doors were open, you would not receive her teaching.

ii. Weakness and temptation; did you use *all* the means of grace and *per-severe* in them?

iii. Bad example; you had the example of CHRIST, of his Saints, why did you follow bad examples?

III. Consider the verdict, and the sentence:

i. Who are the Jury? those who were tempted like you, who were weak like you, but who overcame through CHRIST who strengthened them; "*the saints shall judge the world.*"

—I. Cor., vi., 2.

ii. The Verdict, Guilty.

iii. The Sentence, "*Depart from me*" Where? "*Into everlasting fire,*" into Hell.

Affections.—Fear at the strictness of that Judgment; gratitude for time to repent; resolve to examine yourself as though at the Judgment Seat of CHRIST; pray for a merciful judgment.

SECOND SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

THE SOUL'S ADVENT CRY.

"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come."—Isaiah, xxi., 11-12

PRELUDE I.—Picture a mediæval city, girded by walls and towers; surrounded by the army of the enemy; the watchmen keeping guard through the night, and all anxiously waiting for day.

PRELUDE II —Pray to be delivered from self-deception.

I. Consider this as a picture of yourself:

i. The guarded city: your soul, girded with the fortifications of grace, clad with the armour of CHRIST.

ii. The besieging army: the combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil, encamped against you, ever on their lookout for an opportunity to attack you.

iii. The night: the long interval between CHRIST's first and second Advents, the dark night of the world, the time for spiritual slumber, and diabolic attacks.

II. Consider the Soul's Advent Cry, "*Watchman, what of the night?*"

i. The watchmen: the Priests of the Church, whose duty it is to keep guard through the night, warning souls of the dangers that threaten; answering their questions and doubts; advising in their difficulties.

ii. The question, "*What of the night?*" For my soul, what are its prospects?

iii. The double answer: "*The morning cometh, and also the night.*" How strange! What does it mean? That when the night of time ends, there are two eternities—an everlasting morning of joy, an eternal night of despair. The watchman answers guardedly, "*If ye will enquire, enquire ye.*" Ask your own soul which is in store for you; think of that night of endless darkness, into which "*the wicked shall be turned,*" and "*all the people who FORGET God.*" Those who have slept through this world, who have not been awakened by the light of grace, will have their eyes forced open by the fires of eternity, and then will enter on that long night of darkness, still their cry, "*watchman, what of the night?*"—but the answer, it is endless, no hope, no ray of light!

III. Consider the watchman's advice:

i. "*If ye will enquire, enquire ye.*" If you desire to know what of the night, enquire of your own heart, look into your own life, examine yourself, and you may know whether the morning or the night are coming to you.

ii. "*Return.*" If you have erred and strayed, return to the fold; return, ere it is too late.

iii. "*Come.*" CHRIST's Advent invitation, Come unto Me; He comes to meet you in the Christmas Eucharist, and He invites you to come. He will come with all His Saints at the last, and if you have been faithful, He will say, Come! "*Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Affections.—Pray against self-deception; examine what are the signs of the morning in your own life; resolve to watch and pray, that you be not overcome unawares, and to come to Him now, Who will give rest to your soul.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

CHRIST'S ADVENT IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God."
I. Cor., iv., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul's reception by the Galatians; "*Ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*"—Gal., iv., 14.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, forgetting the individual, you may remember the Ambassador of CHRIST in every Priest.

As on the two preceding Sundays, the Collect is explained by the Epistle.

I. Consider how the Priesthood is to be regarded, as taught in the services of to-day:

i. As Ministers of CHRIST, *not* of the people, and so to seek to please GOD and not men, "*for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*"—Gal., i., 10.

ii. As Stewards of the mysteries of GOD: the position of a steward is between the lord and his people, having a discretion in what he does, but having to give an account for it; so the Priest has to deal with souls, giving them their food, &c.; remembering that they are not his own, and yet using his judgment, as one who will have to give an account to his LORD.

iii. As shewing the signs of CHRIST's Advent in their work: as the Gospel to-day tells us, "*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*" (These signs of CHRIST's work in the ministry of His Church will form the subjects of Meditation for the rest of this week, excepting Friday.)

II. Consider the Responsibility involved in the requirement of "*being found faithful*":

i. The Responsibility of the Priest: to be fearless in witnessing to the Truth; in setting an example to his flock, and in ministering the Sacraments of grace.

ii. The responsibility of the people: to receive him as the Ambassador of CHRIST; and to profit by his ministrations.

iii. The old custom of the Church has been to bury the people with their feet to the East, but Priests with their feet to the West, that each time a Priest is buried it might remind both Priest and people that, at the Second Coming of CHRIST, they will rise facing one another, to accuse one another, if either have forgotten their responsibility.

III. Consider how you have received CHRIST, coming to you in His Priests, in the past:

i. The Mysteries: Have you diligently sought the means of grace at their hands?

ii. Have you reverently listened to their instructions, as coming from CHRIST's Ambassadors? or, if wanting in eloquence or learning, have you ever ridiculed them?

iii. "*A very small thing that I should be judged of you.*" Have you criticised GOD's ministers or judged them? remember "*to his own master he standeth or falleth.*" (Rom., xiv., 4.)

Affections.—Pray for humility in receiving instruction, diligence in following it; charity towards all, especially to those whom GOD has called to the ministry of the Church; thank GOD for the treasure you have in these earthen vessels.

THIRD MONDAY IN ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

“*The Blind receive their sight.*”—S. Matt., xi., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD leading the blind man out of Bethsaida ; and read the account of his cure. (S. Mark, viii., 22–27.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater light.

I. Consider the misery of blindness :

i. The man perhaps never had seen the beauties of the earth, the faces of those he loved ; or, if he had once seen them, their memory only reminded him of what he had lost ; and yet blindness, by shutting out the world, may save the soul from many sins, leading it to the contemplation of GOD ; it too is only for this life. How much greater the wretchedness of spiritual blindness, never to realize the glories of heaven, the thorn-crowned Face of the Beloved of the soul !

ii. Think of the beauties which surrounded him, of which words failed to convey any idea ; *e. g.*, the glories of colour :—or of Elisha’s servant at Dothan (II. Kings, vi., 17), before his eyes were opened seeing only the danger, but then seeing the horses and chariots of fire.—The angel hosts surround you ; have your spiritual eyes been opened to see them, is your belief in the spiritual world a mere dry dogma, or a living reality ?

iii. The first face he saw was the Face of JESUS. In meditation have you seen that Face ? Ask that your eyes may be opened to see It, and ravished by His love and beauty, you will never tire of the sight ; the joy of eternity, a foretaste is promised to the pure in heart now in time. (S. Matt., v., 8.) Let this be your one prayer, “*One thing have I desired . . . to behold the fair beauty of the Lord.*”—Ps., xxvii., 4.

II. Consider the healing : it was gradual, three distinct stages :

i. CHRIST “*led him out of the town.*”

ii. He “*spit on his eyes and put His hands upon him*” ; the first touch enabled him to see indistinctly, “*men as trees, walking.*”

iii. He touched him again ; and he saw clearly.

iv. His advice : “*Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.*” Reserve as to God’s dealings with you.

III. Consider as a sign of our LORD’s Advent in His Church that she does the same spiritual work by the same gradual stages :

i. By her teaching, she endeavours to lead men aside from the world.

ii. By Absolution, she removes the hindrance to spiritual sight, sin ; the first touch of the pierced Hands ; but perfect sight is not given at once, it has to be exercised, and so to grow by meditation ;—the looking up and seeing spiritual things at first indistinctly.

iii. By the H. E. She brings the soul in contact with CHRIST again, and Food for spiritual growth is supplied ; and then, by perseverance in meditation, the soul comes at last to see spiritual things more clearly.

Affections.—Desire for the sight of our LORD : realization of the misery of spiritual blindness ; resolve to come more apart from the world, and to seek, in the Sacraments of the Church and the exercise of meditation, spiritual healing and illumination ; to be patient, not expecting to see all things at once.

THIRD TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL LAMENESS.

"The Lame walk."—S. Matt., xi., 5. *"How long halt ye between two opinions?"*—I. Kings, xviii., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, looking up at S. Peter; and read the account of his cure. (Acts, iii., 1-13.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for faith to receive all the teachings of CHRIST'S Church. Spiritual Lameness is one of the most common hindrances to Christian progress; it is the attitude of that large class with unsettled views as to matters of faith, who, while they are halting between a variety of opinions, are left behind in the great race of the soul's life.

I. Consider the affliction of this man's natural lameness:

i. The multitude streaming past him into the Temple of God, but he always left outside.

ii. Asking an alms to enable him to protract his misery outside in the world, instead of asking help to enter the Temple.

iii. He had been in this position all his life; it was a natural defect to which he was becoming callous.

II. Consider how well this represents the spiritual malady of the doubting soul:

i. The faithful hurrying by into the House of God, there to receive His blessings, the doubter always left outside.

ii. This class begging of all that pass, and so keeping alive the spirit of indecision by listening to what every one says.

iii. A natural defect often of temperament, and yet aggravated by habit, till all hope of better things dies out.

III. Consider the stages of the cure:

i. *"Look on us"*; the Church's claim for attention and trusting obedience.

ii. *"He gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them"*; his recognition of the claims; not only giving heed, but expecting to receive something; *i. e.*, beginning to exercise obedience and faith.

iii. *"Rise up and walk"*: the Church's authoritative command; directing him to do what seemed impossible, and yet, on his endeavouring to obey, supplying the needful power. *"Credo, quia impossibile."*

IV. Consider the nature of the Church's power:

i. To help the doubting by speaking with authority, pointing out the way, and supplying, through her ministrations, power to walk in that way.

ii. Disclaiming both worldly power, *"Silver and gold have I none,"* and individual power, *"as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk."*

iii. *"In the name of Jesus Christ"*: disowning all but the authority and efficacy of the name of her LORD.

iv. The world marvels at the claims of the Church, and at her work in those who have faith, but the world goes on marvelling, and learns no lesson of faith in the Church.

Affections.—Thanksgiving to God who hath given such power unto men; reverence for the Church; resolve to accept her teachings as the Voice of CHRIST, and to obey her rules.

THIRD WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL LEPROSY.

"The lepers are cleansed."—S. Matt., xi., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Naaman hiding his leprosy beneath his purple robes at the court of the King of Syria; and read his history (II. Kings, v., 1-16).

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to use faithfully and humbly all the remedies for sin that the Church offers.

I. Consider leprosy as the especial type of sin :

i. It was incurable save by direct interposition of GOD ; all earthly medicine was useless.

ii. It cut the leper off from communion with his people, as sin cuts the soul off from Communion with the Body of CHRIST.

iii. It began generally with a few spots, and gradually spread ; and it was loathsome.

II. Consider Naaman trying various means of alleviating his misery :

i. By his position : He was rich, powerful, popular ; he had all the world could give ; *but* he was a leper, and that poisoned all. So the sinner tries to forget his sin in pleasure or success, but it poisons all happiness.

ii. By seeking royal sympathy and help : First in his own country, then of the King of Israel. So the sinner seeks in the world what help the world offers, and when that fails, turns, perhaps, to Israel, the Church ; but in pride seeks the recognition of the great ones there ; he is a step nearer, but still unhelped.

iii. By seeking Elisha, but rejecting his advice through pride, and neglecting to use the means pointed out, for the same reason. So the sinner may find it is not to the kings of the Christian world, but to the Priests of GOD's Church, that the medicine for sin has been entrusted ; and yet, through pride, may reject their counsel, and neglect to use the remedy.

III. Consider the cure of leprosy :

i. GOD's servant only could help, not the king ; and he could only point out the means ; so our LORD, in both cases of healing leprosy, sends the leper to the Priest (S. Luke, v., 14, and xvii., 14). So now, the ministration of the Sacraments is with the Priest only, but he can only counsel and offer them—he can do nothing without the sinner's own coöperation.

ii. The washing, so simple that Naaman rejected it, and yet, when tried, so efficacious. So in the Sacraments, especially in Baptism and Absolution, the means so simple—a little water, a few words, and yet so full of blessing. How many are kept back from using them by pride, who profess to believe in them ! There is a great difference between *believing* in the Precious Blood and *using* It.

iii. Naaman's confession of his mistake at first, and gratitude for the healing received. How many, who have said like him, "*Are not Abana and Pharpar . . . better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?*" have found out their mistake, and openly acknowledged it to the world ; but the spiritual lepers refuse to believe the testimony of experience, and so go on in their misery.

Affections.—Fear lest you should neglect any remedy for sin ; humility in using GOD's means of grace ; gratitude for the great gift of the Precious Blood in the Church ; diligence and sincerity in using It.

THIRD THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE.

"The dead are raised up."—S. Matt., xi., 5. *"Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*—S. John, vi., 54.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD speaking these words to those who sought a sign of His power, and to those who had seen the miracle of the feeding of the multitude.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so feed on CHRIST in the H. E. that you may have His life in you, and so be delivered from eternal death.

I. Consider Life as the essential prerogative of GOD; He is the Source of all life, animal, mental, and moral; hence its sacredness and mystery:

i. Life in the three parts of man's nature, animal, mental, and moral, is the *Effect* of which GOD is the continual *Cause*; but the connecting link in each is some material means; the gift of life is not absolute, once for all; but conditional for its continuance on the use of means.

ii. These means, in the three cases, are in strict analogy; in each something from without is received into and assimilated to the part: (a.) In animal life, the use of food; (b.) in mental life, the study of GOD's works in nature, &c.; (c.) in moral life, the use of Sacraments.

iii. The disregard of these means brings death, because it is separation from GOD, the Source of Life: (a.) Starvation soon terminates the animal life; (b.) ignorance reduces the mental life to its lowest ebb, as seen in some savage nations; (c.) neglect of the Sacraments deprives the moral life of its sustenance; spiritual starvation causes spiritual death.

II. Consider that eternal life is the gift of CHRIST (S. John, xvii., 2), and can only be imparted through feeding on Him; and thus only can man be delivered from the dominion of death:

i. The principle of spiritual life is imparted in Baptism, as at birth, but needs food for its support and development; CHRIST is then born into man's nature through the operation of the Holy Ghost, but CHRIST in man's nature needs to be fed by CHRIST in the H. E., that the principle of eternal life, thus imparted, may grow *"unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*

ii. While then it is true that the dead soul needs the principle of life, which is CHRIST, imparted to it in Baptism, before it has capacity for feeding on CHRIST in the H. E., as food put into the lips of a dead man cannot benefit him, yet also the soul, which has the principle of life, is in danger of death from deprivation of the H. E., just as a living man without food will soon die of starvation.

iii. This Sacramental feeding on CHRIST is the means of assimilating the whole nature to CHRIST, and the development of that eternal life which can only be possessed as long as we abide in CHRIST.

III. There are three states in physical life when food is especially needed, and when hunger is the sign of health:

i. Convalescence: so, when we are recovering from the sickness of sin, we shall especially need and crave for the Bread of Life, to complete our healing.

ii. Growth: so, when we are growing in spiritual stature, we shall hunger and thirst after Righteousness, that is, our LORD, in the H. E.

iii. Labour: CHRIST-like work can only be done by a CHRIST-like nature, and this can only be developed by feeding on CHRIST; hence a desire for Communion is the sign of healthy work for GOD.

Affections.—Colloquy with CHRIST as the Bread of Life; desire for Communion; thankfulness for the great Gift; fear of spiritual death; especial preparation for Christmas Communion

THIRD FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

HELL.

"The Wicked shall be turned into hell and all the people that forget God."—Ps., ix., 17. "To be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—S. Mark, ix., 47-48. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—S. Matt., xxv., 41.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a condemned soul leaving the Judgment seat with this sentence; and forced to say, it is most just.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, "from Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, Good LORD, deliver me."

I. Why is it necessary to believe in Hell, when so many now do not?

i. Hell is the especial revelation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; except Isaiah, the writers of the Old Testament tell us little of it; it was reserved for the lips of Him Who loved us; it is a mark of His love to tell us the truth, and so to lead us to fear, and avoid Hell.

ii. Satan caused the fall of our first parents by suggesting a doubt as to God's revelation of His Severity and Justice, "*ye shall not surely die*"; so now, this is his special temptation.

iii. People say it is important to believe in Heaven, but not so with regard to Hell; true! if you do not believe in heaven, you will not attain to it; but disbelief in hell will not interfere with your going there.

II. What is Hell? "*Depart from me*"; to be separated from GOD, to be lost! Consider some of the elements which go to make up Hell; no need to think of material pains now:

i. The loss, of Hell: everything lost, my soul, all my opportunities, my friends and relations, both natural and spiritual, the fellowship of the angels and saints,—above all, GOD!

ii. The desire, of Hell: The soul will have seen JESUS at the Judgment, and will be penetrated with the most absorbing desire for Him; it knows then what the love of GOD is, a love which never can be satisfied, this will be one of its chief torments, the attraction of GOD.

iii. The remorse of Hell: Memory recalling all the calls, warnings, means of grace offered but neglected; self-accusation, it was my own fault, this is "*the worm that dieth not*."

iv. The companionship of Hell: The devils, and we know not how great is their malice; and the lost; those whom we perhaps led there, the companions of our sins, how they will hate us, and reproach us!

v. The despair of Hell: Here, to help us to bear our pains and sorrows we have the power of hope, that they will pass away in time; of sympathy from others; of prayer to GOD, something we can do; but no Hope, no sympathy, no praying in Hell; only despair.

vi. The eternity of Hell: The great aggravation of every element of torment, that it is eternal; think what eternity means!

III. Who will go to Hell? Two classes:

i. The wicked; the positive side of sin, all who die in unrepented, unforgiven mortal sin, all who have prepared themselves thus for Hell, for Hell was not prepared for them, but "*for the devil and his angels*."

ii. All the people who forget God: the negative side of sin, all who have left undone the work for which they were created; who have failed to prepare themselves for the Heaven which our Lord had prepared for them; all who trusted to morality without religion to save them.

Affections.—Worship the adorable Justice of GOD; thank Him that you are not now in hell: realize that you might have been, had you died after that last mortal sin; pray for a true fear of Hell, and for grace ever to avoid sin.

THIRD SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL DEAFNESS.

"*The deaf hear.*"—S. Matt., xi., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD looking up to heaven, and groaning at the miserable condition of the deaf man; and read the account of his cure. (S. Mark, vii., 32–36.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be able truly to say, "*Speak, Lord; for Thy servant HEARETH.*"—I. Sam., iii., 9.

Consider the state of natural deafness: How much is lost of what goes on around! Conversation almost impossible, and yet how much worse is spiritual deafness!

I. Consider the Voice of God:

- i. It is a *living* Voice; *i. e.*, always speaking, and yet how seldom we listen.
- ii. It is mighty in its operation; and yet a still, small Voice, how often drowned by the voices of worldliness and sin!
- iii. It is the Voice of One Who loves you, Whom it is your highest joy to love; It tells of the things which it is our deepest beatitude to know; It calls us Home; and yet the spiritually deaf hear it not.

II. The Healing is gradual, as in the case of blindness; and very similar in its stages; compare last Monday's Meditation, Points II. and III.

III. Consider our Lord's Words, "*The sheep follow Him: for they know His Voice.*"—S. John, x., 4.

- i. The means through which the Voice speaks, the Bible, the Conscience, Nature, but chiefly now the Church; but in each, through the operation of the Holy Ghost.
- ii. It guides us into all Truth; It shews us things to come.
- iii. It says "*follow Me,*" and passes on through this dying world, and we must follow closely, lest we lose the Voice amid the world's din, and be left to die with the world.

IV. Consider that Voice in the Priesthood of the Church:

- i. In preaching and instruction: *the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.*"
- ii. In Absolution, "*Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee.*"
- iii. In the H. E., "*This is My Body.*"
- iv. The Witness of thousands of grateful souls attest Its efficacy; all who have heard JESUS speaking through His Church, promising the spiritual blessings of His Kingdom, who have obeyed, and found all to be true, and who join the chorus of those, who, while they marvel, believe and glorify God, who hath given such power unto men.

Affections.—Gratitude that the Voice still speaks; fear lest our sins should drown that Voice; resolve to cultivate the habit of listening for the Voice to speak to your soul, in all its various ways; and especially in the Ministry of the Church.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

CHRIST'S ADVENT IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

"O Lord, raise up, we pray Thee, Thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us."—**Collect.**

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the athlete, as he begins each fresh round of the race-course, rallying for a new effort.

PRELUDE II.—Pray with the Collect, "that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, God's bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us."

We are standing on the threshold of Christmas, having nearly finished our Advent preparation; we have been reminded of our LORD's Advents, in humility and glory, in the Scriptures, and in the ministry of the Church; to-day we are taught His Advent to individual souls in their Christmas Communion, for which Advent is the preparation, without which Advent is meaningless, and Christmas not CHRIST's Mass.

I. The connection between the Collect and Epistle, though less obvious than on the three previous Sundays, is still most close; the Collect speaks of a race, Advent is the beginning of another round of the course; consider this race:

i. The difficulties and obstacles: our sins and their result in weakness, &c.; the assaults of the devil through temptation are not properly obstacles.

ii. On the first Christmas-Day our LORD came to begin this race with us: so now, on every Christmas, in our Communion, to begin another round of the course.

iii. On the first Christmas-Day He raised up His power to come to succour a world sore let and hindered by sin; on each Christmas-Day He comes to individual souls in the same condition, to help them with His bountiful grace and mercy.

II. Consider how He comes in the H. E.:

i. "With great might:" All the might of His Divinity, an Almighty succour: so we need never fear or fail, for "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"—Phil., iv., 13.

ii. We have seen how close a resemblance there is between our LORD's first Advent in humility and in the B. Sacrament; we may trace the same between His Advent in glory and in the B. Sacrament: "in great majesty to judge both quick and dead."

(a.) In great majesty: in the H. E., surrounded by invisible angel hosts. "With angels and archangels and all the company of heaven."

(b.) To judge both quick and dead: so each Communion judges us; to the quick, the living soul, a savour of life unto life; to the soul dead in sin, a savour of death unto death.

iii. In our Christmas Communion our LORD judges of our Advent work, and rewards us according to our deservings.

Affections.—Gratitude for the Christmas Gift; realize your own weakness and CHRIST's strength; resolve to begin anew in trusting reliance on His promised grace.

FOURTH MONDAY IN ADVENT.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTMAS JOY.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."—Phil., iv., 4, 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the joy of the angels at the Birth of CHRIST, as they sang "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"—S. Luke, ii., 14.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for fellowship in their joy.

The last week in Advent, Christmas is very near, "*the LORD is at hand*"; and so the Church carries our thoughts forward to the festival, and bids us, Rejoice.

I. Consider some elements of Christmas joy:

i. We are drawing on to the festival of the first Advent, a very joyful time for the world, when the Light shone out amid the darkness, and the Hope of the Church of the Old Covenant became the Faith of the New.

ii. We are drawing nearer to the Second Advent, the LORD is at hand, when the Light of the Everlasting Day shall disperse all darkness, and the Hope of the Church in time shall become the possession and joy of the Church in eternity.

iii. You will rejoice this Christmas at the commemoration of the first Advent. Could you if the Second Advent were now to come?

II. Consider the manifestation of Christmas joy (the word translated moderation (*τὸ ἐπιεικὲς*) signifies forbearance, consideration for others):

i. Christmas joy must not be selfish; a joy which seeks to show itself in making others happy; "*as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of GOD.*"—I. Pet., iv., 10.

ii. All men who know our joy must then see its result in gentle forbearance and loving consideration for others; a joy which is increased by being shared with others.

iii. This the distinguishing feature between the world's joy, and the Christian's, at Christmas; the one, a superficial excitement, leading often to excess; the other, interior happiness, causing love to our neighbour and to GOD; the one is but for a time, and then dies away; the other goes on growing, till consummated in the rapture of heaven.

III. Consider some imperfections of Christmas joy *now*:

i. It is chilled by the atmosphere of a world that loves not CHRIST, and checked by the presence of sin and sorrow.

ii. It is but temporary: Christmas will soon be followed by Lent, reminding us that we can have but glimpses of the sunshine here, and teaching us to long for the hereafter, when there will be no clouds or darkness to chase away the light.

iii. The LORD is at hand: this thought must influence our joys and woes; giving a solemnity to all joy, and a bright lining to every cloud of sorrow.

Affections.—Joy at the Christmas Gift; hope for the coming of CHRIST; love of the Infant Saviour; prepare by Advent penitence; resolve to do some definite act of charity to bring Christmas joy to another heart.

FOURTH TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

THREE VIEWS OF OURSELVES.

"What sayest thou of thyself?"—S. John, i., 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John replying to the messengers in honest self-forgetfulness.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to know ourselves truly, and to speak of ourselves humbly.

I. Consider the three opinions of ourselves :

i. Our own opinion :

(a.) If you were to ask all you met this question, and to believe their answer, you would have to suppose that the world was full of the best of men ; so honourable, so unselfish, so wise, so important to the community.

(b.) If, without actually asking, you were to judge most people by their conversation, you would be led to much the same conclusion.

(c.) Self-satisfaction : wishing to think well of ourselves is one of the mistakes of the day ; you recognize it in others—do you fall into it yourself ? Is it a safe condition in relation to our LORD'S Advent ?

ii. The world's opinion : It is not so favourable ; the world notices our faults and peculiarities, and often retails every bit of scandal about us that it can discover, though not to our face ; it is often nearly right about our outer life, it is generally wrong about our inner life ; but when we die it is quite ready to judge us leniently, and the epitaphs in the grave-yards would lead to the same conclusion, that the world was full of the best of men, and to ask, with the little child, where the bad people were buried.

iii. GOD'S opinion : How astonished we should be if we could know it ; so different from our own, and from the world's, but so just.

II. "*What sayest thou of thyself?*" Consider this as GOD'S question to us :

i. Daily : If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged ; if we would look our sins honestly in the face, and humbly confess them, we should not have to face them in shame at the last day.

ii. At the day of Judgment : We shall have to speak the truth then ; we shall see ourselves exactly as we are ; we shall have to be our own accusers then.

iii. Then why not now ? Let us answer the question truly, this Advent ; and, to do so, let us take some trouble to find out what we are.

Affections.—Fear of self-deception ; desire to be honest in self-examination ; resolve to make a very thorough examination of conscience, before Christmas ; to be watchful to speak humbly of ourselves.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

CHRIST'S HIDDEN PRESENCE IN THE WORLD.

"There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not."—S. John, i., 26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the crowd on the banks of the Jordan, and among them our LORD, the supposed carpenter's son, unknown.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever recognize and receive CHRIST, in whatever way He comes.

Consider how often our B. LORD stands among us unrecognized, and therefore unheeded.

I. In His poor:

i. We are often deceived in those who seek our aid; do we become hard and unsympathetic? if so, think of the danger of real need going unrelieved, and One standing among us unknown and uncared for, Who may say at the last *"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me."*

ii. Examine as to the active side of your ministrations to the poor, and resolve on some definite act of almsgiving this Christmas.

iii. Examine as to the passive side of your charity, your feeling of compassion for the distressed; remember our LORD *groaned*, before healing the deaf man (S. Mark, vii., 34); *wept* at the grave, before raising Lazarus (S. John, xi., 35). Almsgiving must have sympathy as its spring, if it is to be CHRIST-like; determine this Christmas to try to alleviate the sorrows of some of CHRIST'S poor by your sympathy.

II. In His Saints:

i. How seldom they are recognized, whilst among us; not the great, or learned, or noble, but the holy.

ii. How often they are despised; think of Dives passing Lazarus, day by day, with contempt, but finding him one of God's Saints, when too late; *"whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose"*, and yet whom I despised and disregarded here.

iii. Think of the reading of the names out of the Book of Life: they will mostly be names we do not recognize; those in whom CHRIST dwelt unknown.

III. In the crowd in which we mingle in our daily life; our friends, acquaintances, fellow-Christians, therefore cultivate the habit of:

i. Consideration for others: we do not know how dear they may be to GOD (Ezek., xviii., 4.)

ii. Reverence for others: lest we scandalize one of CHRIST'S little ones. (S. Matt., xviii., 6.)

iii. Watchfulness of ourselves: lest One who standeth by see us sin.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the opportunity of ministering to CHRIST in His poor; fear lest you should pass Him by unknown; love of His Saints; pray for spiritual discernment.

FOURTH THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

JESUS OUR PEACE.

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil., iv., 7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD rebuking the storm on the lake with the words, "*Peace, be still.*"

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the gift of Peace.

I. Consider the condition of the world at the first Advent—the confusion, rebellion, and warfare of sin, raging, like chaos, everywhere; and how, by the Incarnation, Peace was made:

i. Between GOD and man. (Rom., v., 1; II. Cor., v., 19.)

ii. Between man and man: making all men brethren in CHRIST. (S. Mark, ix., 50.)

iii. In man's own nature. (Col., iii., 15.)

II. The same Peace is made in the H. E. for the individual; for JESUS is our Peace. (Eph., ii., 14.)

i. Between GOD and man: for they are brought into the closest union. (S. John vi., 56.)

ii. Between man and man: for in H. E. all communicate with the whole Body of CHRIST; therefore, with each other, and with all the saints, who have **gone** before; "*we have fellowship one with another.*"—I. S. John, i., 7.

iii. In man's own heart: JESUS comes to reign there, and His reign is perfect peace. (Ps. lxxii., 7.)

III. Consider some of the elements of this Peace:

i. It is interior: not freedom from outward struggle, but manifested chiefly in times of external warfare; *e. g.*, the two storms on the lake. (S. Mark, iv., 39; S. John, vi., 18-21.)

ii. It is the result of war, or preparation for war: nations now at peace have passed through times of war which ended in peace. So in the spiritual kingdom: there was war in heaven, now all is peace; on Calvary there was war first, the gift of peace immediately after; so we must look for this peace to be developed by struggle with our spiritual foes, and to exist independent of all outward strife; if our Communion is to bring us peace, they must be prepared for by the struggle of penitence.

iii. It passes understanding: the world cannot comprehend it; the saints cannot fully realize it here.

iv. "*Shall keep your hearts and minds*"—*i. e.*, your hearts and their fruits: the heart, here, is the centre of feeling, willing, and thinking; the word translated "*minds*" (τὰ νοήματα) signifies properly the products of spiritual activity, of thinking, willing, &c.; thus this gift of Peace is to rule your inner life, and to manifest its power in your outer life.

Affections.—Desire for this Peace; willingness to struggle on till it is reached; preparation for the warfare necessary to gain it; examination as to the results of your Communion in regard to this Peace; pray the Apostles' prayer, "*Lord, save us: we perish*"; that you may hear the answer, "*Peace, be still.*"

FOURTH FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

HEAVEN.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His Beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."—Isaiah xxxiii., 17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Vision of heaven as described by S. John, in Rev., iv.

PRELUDE II. —Pray the Psalmist's prayer: "*One thing have I desired of the LORD, . . . even that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the LORD.*"—Ps., xxvii., 4

I. Consider some of the negative joys of heaven; how much we shall be delivered from there:

i. Sorrow and suffering; "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*"—Rev. vii., 17; but there must be tears to wipe away; we must mourn that we may be comforted; we must sow in tears, if we are to reap in joy. (S. Matt., v., 4; Ps. cxxvi., 5.)

ii. Doubts and fears: how many to distress and discourage us now, but all clear then.

iii. Sin: the one supreme evil, with which we had to struggle here, and which kept us in danger every moment of losing God, our soul, eternity.

II. Consider some of the positive joys; the perfect beatitude of every faculty of mind and body:

i. Joy of memory: to remember our past life, all our sufferings, all God's blessings; memory, the chief torment of the lost, will be the joy of the Saints.

ii. Joy of intellect: to know all mysteries; to contemplate God, for "*we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*"—I. S. John, iii., 4.

iii. Joy of will: to love God as we desire to, and to experience His love, and to have no possibility of sinning against Him.

III. Consider the supreme joy, to "*see the King in His Beauty,*" the beatific Vision, He, whom we have longed for, and worshipped here beneath the Sacramental Veil, to see Him face to face!

IV. Consider the eternity of Heaven: "*Of Whose Kingdom there shall be no end.*" Here the one drop of poison to all happiness is the dread of change, the certainty that it will not last; there, eternity; eternity in the fellowship of God, the Holy Angels, and the Saints. Eternity of every joy!

Affections.—Gratitude to God for preparing such happiness for us; desire to see the King in His Beauty; contempt of the passing attractions of the world; courage in facing all trials here; resolve often to think of heaven; pray that you may so be faithful unto death that you may receive the Crown of Life.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY.

"And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city."—S. Luke, ii., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the crowds traveling towards Bethlehem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that JESUS may find room prepared for Him in **your** heart.

I. Consider the world's preparation for Christmas-Day :

i. It had been 4,000 years preparing, but it was not ready when He came ; His coming had been foretold, all the world was in expectation, but not ready—it never is.

ii. It was a busy time ; the world's census was being taken ; the people were crowding the inn ; there was no time for JESUS, no room for JESUS—there never is, in the world.

iii. It has been said that to all the world offers at least a two-fold hospitality—to be born, and to die ; but even this is more than it affords its Creator ; a Manger and a Cross ; Bethlehem foreshadows Calvary.

II. Consider your own preparation for Christmas-Day :

i. It is over now ; you have been preparing all Advent, are you ready ? All your life you are preparing for His Second Coming, reminded of it, expecting it ; will you be found ready ?

ii. It is a busy time in the world ; Christmas always is. What with work and pleasure, have you time for JESUS ? He always comes when something else is calling you ; you always have to give up the world for Him, or to give Him up for the world.

iii. Christmas is a great time for hospitality ; houses are crowded, festivities await us. Have you room for JESUS ? When you make your Communion to-morrow, will He find your heart already crowded, or prepared for Him ?

III. Consider the preparation of SS. Mary and Joseph ; they had the same and greater difficulties :

i. They had been looking forward to this day, meditating on the prophecies, pondering the angelic message of Gabriel ; and the weary journey, the many repulses, as they sought for lodging, had not interfered with their preparation ; they were ready.

ii. It was a busy time for them ; they had to obey the world's claims, to enroll themselves ; all was confusion and turmoil around ; it did not disturb their preparation—they were ready.

iii. It was little they had to give to Him, Who gave Himself to them as the first Christmas Gift ; but they gave Him all—they gave themselves ! And JESUS cares more for that than all beside. Yes, they had realized that this was the supreme moment of the world's history, and nothing could take their thoughts, their hearts, from Him. They were ready.

Affections.—Gratitude for the Christmas Gift ; watchfulness against allowing the world to encroach on what belongs to JESUS ; self-oblation ; recollection.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

"And Manoah said....How shall we order the Child, and how shall we do unto Him?"—Judg., xiii, 12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Eternal Father's Christmas Gift to the world, and to your soul—His own Son.

PRELUDE II.—Pray the prayer of Manoah.

I. Consider Samson as a type of CHRIST :

- i. In his birth ; announced by an angel. (Judg., xiii., 3.)
- ii. In his life, and miracles ; the strong man of the Old Covenant.
- iii. In his death ; stretching forth his arms to take hold of the two pillars, bowing himself, and, by his death, destroying his enemies. (Judg., xvi., 29-30.)

II. We have been praying all this week that He would raise up His power and come among us, and with great might succour us ; and GOD has answered our prayer, and has come in all the Might of His GODHEAD, and yet as a little Child, "*For unto us a Child is born*"; and that Child is the Mighty GOD, the Stronger Man of the New Covenant ; to-day He comes forth out of His Chamber, the hidden chamber of the Virgin's Womb ; to-day as a Giant He rejoices to begin His course, to run with us our course, sore let and hindered as we are.

III. We have made our Christmas Communion, accepted the charge, the Child is in our care ; and now, and always, this must be our prayer. Consider what we can do for Him :

- i. Feed Him ; with acts of love.
- ii. Talk to Him ; in our meditations.
- iii. Comfort Him ; by our acts of reparation and penitence.
- iv. Watch over Him ; that no sin enter our hearts to hurt Him.
- v. Day by day pray the prayer of Manoah more earnestly.

Affections.—Make acts of love, joy, and gratitude ; speak to the Child, ask Him to free you from your enemies, your sins, to make your heart His Home ; resolve ever to be faithful to Him.

S. STEPHEN'S DAY.

THE VISION OF JESUS.

"And he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right Hand of God."—Acts, vii., 55.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Vision which S. Stephen saw.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, in our daily life, this Vision may ever be before our eyes.

The birthdays of the two Saints, who, while in the flesh, saw the glories of heaven, follow the Birthday of their King, as the effect follows the cause.

I. Consider that this Vision was the result :

i. Of the Incarnation : which had bridged over the gulf between earth and heaven, and had made God visible, in the Person of the Incarnate Son.

ii. Of the Holy Ghost : Which strengthened S. Stephen's spiritual gaze ; "*being full of the Holy Ghost,*" he saw it.

iii. Of a definite endeavour on S. Stephen's part : he looked up stedfastly into heaven.

II. Consider the effect of this Vision on S. Stephen :

i. It strengthened him for his last trial.

ii. It called him to a fellowship in CHRIST's sufferings. If we behold His heavenly glory, we must not shrink back from the path of suffering, which leads to that throne. "*If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.*"—II. Tim., ii., 12.

iii. It called him to manifest a CHRIST-like spirit in bearing his sufferings ; he prayed for his murderers.

III. And this should be the strength of your daily life ; to go through the world with the Vision, ever before you, of JESUS, standing in His glory, watching you, strengthening you, showing you the glory that awaits you ; this must be your help :

i. In trouble or danger : a loving Eye is watching, an Almighty Arm is protecting me.

ii. In temptation to sin : how can I sin in His sight, when I have His grace to help me.

iii. In a life of distraction and busy work : each act done for Him, offered to Him, with the old prayer, "*propter Te, Domine, propter Te.*"

IV. But remember, in regard to the Vision :

i. It is not to make life easier, only happier ; not to free you from struggle, only to give you strength to endure.

ii. You can only see it in the power of the Holy Ghost.

iii. You must do your part, by keeping yourself in the attitude of looking up stedfastly into heaven.

Affections.—Thank God for His great glory ; welcome the sufferings of your life, as the only path to heaven ; invoke the aid of the Holy Ghost ; resolve to think more of the glory that awaits the Christian athlete who follows the steps of S. Stephen.

S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY.

THE EXILE'S HOME.

'After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.'—Rev., iv., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the aged exile, while labouring in the mines of Patmos, seeing the vision of heaven.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all sorrows may lead us to realize our exile here, and so to meditate on the glories of hereafter.

I. Consider S. John's life in his exile at Patmos :

- i. His labour ; in the mines, perhaps with others entirely unsympathetic.
- ii. His extreme old age.
- iii. His daily thoughts ; of One, from Whom for sixty years he had been separated, Whom he loved with an all-absorbing personal love, so that His Words, His looks, seemed to *live* in his memory, the only solace of his painful life ; his only hope to be with CHRIST ; his one great prayer, " Even so, come, LORD JESUS."

II. Consider the Vision that he saw of Home :

i. "A door opened." The perfect tense (*ἀνεῳγμένη*), set open, not *was opened*, signifies that the door had been opened, and was *standing* open ; the door of heaven was set open at the Ascension ; the door is CHRIST ; "*I am the door.*"—S. John, x., 9 ; as in meditation we gaze at CHRIST the door opens, and we see into heaven through Him.

ii. "*The Voice which I heard at first*" (i. e., Rev., i., 10), not "*the first voice which I heard.*" There is a difference of opinion whether this was actually the Voice of CHRIST (as Rev., i., 15), or the Divine Voice uttered through some created angel, but it is immaterial. "*As it were of a trumpet*"—it sounded to S. John so loud and clear, because he had trained his ear to listen to the Divine Voice.

iii. "*Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*" That Voice is ever inviting us, in meditation, to look through the open door into heaven, and to gaze upon those things which shall be hereafter. Are we so engrossed in the things of time that we have no ears to hear, no eyes to see the glories of eternity ?

III. Consider that in our exile here we may see this Vision of our Home, if :

i. We cultivate that personal love of our LORD which made S. John the Apostle of love. We may learn it by meditation on our LORD's life and actions, and by frequent attendance at the H. E.

ii. We become in the Spirit. The Revelation is what he saw and heard, when in the Spirit, on the LORD's Day (Rev., i., 10). If we have this love, and this Spirit, it will lead us every Sunday, where it led S. John, Home, to heaven.

Affections.—Resignation to hardship in exile here ; contemplation of our LORD ; make an act of love ; invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit ; desire to see your Home.

HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY.

THE LAW OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.

"He took the young Child and His Mother by night, and departed into Egypt."—S. Matt, ii., 14.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the massacre of the children of Bethlehem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to suffer for CHRIST's sake.

I. Consider how the manifestation of the presence of JESUS brings down on us the attacks of the world :

i. The world tries to kill JESUS in the soul, but the suffering it inflicts, in its endeavour, only knits the soul more closely to Him. JESUS dwelt among the children of Bethlehem ; their death, instead of separation, was the means of union with Him forever ; He dwelt in their city, and they are to dwell in His Kingdom.

ii. The Holy Family fled into Egypt till the death of the tyrant : we can afford to wait in exile here, for we know that the world is dying, will soon be dead.

iii. They were hidden from the world in Egypt : it is in the hidden life, which the world cannot see, that JESUS is most safe in the soul.

II. Consider how the presence of JESUS is our security :

i. The Holy Family were safe, though in apparent danger, because JESUS was with them ; His presence was at once their danger, and their security.

ii. CHRIST's presence in our soul may cause diabolic attack, but it is the pledge of perfect safety. *"I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."*—Ps. xxiii., 4.

iii. We are safest in the time of storm, it is the mark of CHRIST's presence ; if life is easy and temptation unknown, we should indeed fear, it is the sign of His absence.

III. The presence of JESUS depends on our care :

i. The life of the Child seemed to depend on the protection and care of SS. Joseph and Mary, both during the flight, and in Egypt.

ii. The life of CHRIST in our soul depends on our care for Him, fleeing from all danger that threatens Him, watching over Him in our daily life, that our heart may indeed be His Home.

iii. He puts Himself into our hands in the B. Sacrament, as a little Child, appealing to our generosity and love to care for Him ; and yet he is the Almighty God, and His presence in us, while it brings suffering from without, makes heaven within.

Affections.—Welcome all suffering for CHRIST's sake, as the means of fellowship with Him ; colloquy with JESUS, as the Guardian of your soul ; resolve often to retire into your soul to attend on Him ; pray for grace to be faithful to Him.

DECEMBER TWENTY-NINTH.

CHRIST'S COMING TO HIS OWN.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."—S. John, i., 11-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD'S reception at Bethlehem—no room for Him. So now, in the H. E.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may prepare the room for Him in our hearts.

I. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Consider :

i. The Jews as *His own*. What had He not done for them ! For 2,000 years He had prepared them for His coming, by type and prophecy, and yet they received Him not.

ii. Christians in the present day. From earliest childhood we have been taught that we are His own ; that He will come to us in the Sacraments. He comes in Christmas Communions ; how many of His own receive Him not !

iii. Your own soul. It is His own, the one pearl of great price. He "*loved ME and gave Himself for ME.*" How do you receive Him ? Is the room prepared in your heart ? Can you say, "*Come in, Thou Blessed of the LORD ; wherefore standest Thou without ? for I have prepared the house.*"—Gen., xxiv., 31

II. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power." Consider that He is the source of all power, He is Almighty ; not so much because He can do all things, as that nothing can be done without Him. This power which He gives is one of the mysteries of the world's history. Consider it manifested in :

i. The Church's history. What was this power, which, in spite of persecution, grew and triumphed ? It was JESUS, in the Church, in the H. E. "*Lo, I am with you alway.*"

ii. The Saints and Martyrs.

iii. Your own heart. Have you never known the power received with Him in a good Communion ?—power to conquer sin and self, power to work and suffer for Him. You see the fulfilment of His promise in the Saints ; why not in yourself ?

III. "*To become the sons of God.*" By Baptism we are made sons of GOD ; by the H. E. we receive power to live as sons of GOD. Consider GOD is our Father :

i. Therefore, trust in Him in all things.

ii. He is able and willing to give us all things ; therefore, Prayer.

iii. Therefore, responsibility to live as sons of GOD.

Affections.—Invitation of JESUS into your own soul ; pray for His promised power ; resolve always to keep a room there for Him ; gratitude that you are *His own*.

DECEMBER THIRTIETH.

THE INFANT TEACHER.

"They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger."—S. Luke, ii., 16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Child in the manger, in the form of our weakness, and yet in all the glory of Divine power.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may learn the lessons of that Childhood.

I. Of our LORD: consider—

i. His Hiddenness: GOD not only veiled in our flesh, but depriving Himself of the power of manifesting Himself, a helpless Child.

ii. His Silence: the WORD of GOD, seeing, hearing, suffering, and yet silent.

iii. His Patience: that Body grows according to natural laws; He waits.

II. Apply this to ourselves:

i. Let us seek, not the manifestation of a strength which the world can see, but the consciousness of Divine power within.

ii. Let us learn from JESUS, silence, and self-restraint.

iii. Let us practice patience in all things, waiting for the working-out of God's purposes in us, according to the law of His Providence, as manifested in our daily lives.

III. Learn from that sight to cultivate the Virtues of Childhood, for he, who would enter His kingdom, must enter as He did on earth, as a child.

i. The trustfulness of a child: in all dangers and difficulties.

ii. The obedience of a child: ready to try to keep all God's commandments.

iii. The tender conscience of a child: feeling even little sins to be a burden.

iv. The simple, unselfish love of a child: loving God for Himself.

v. The docility of a child: ready to accept all God's revelation.

vi. The humility of a child: entire want of self-consciousness.

Affections.—Colloquy with that Holy Child; adore His silence and patience; pray that He may lead you; resolve to cultivate some one of these virtues especially.

THE EVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His Name was called Jesus."
—S. Luke, ii., 21. *"Thou shalt call His Name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."*—
S. Matt., i., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angel revealing to Joseph the Name of Salvation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that JESUS may be your Saviour.

I. Consider the Name of JESUS:

i. Foreshadowed in type and prophecy, but whispered first by angelic lips of our LORD.

ii. That whisper of the angel caught up by all Creation, till every mountain and valley thrills with the Name of JESUS; the Apostles and their successors proclaiming it all over the world; that echo never to cease, till the last trumpet drowns all other sounds in its great Arise, and the earth passes away, never again to vibrate with any other name!

iii. *"At the Name of JESUS every knee should bow."*—Phil., ii., 10. The effect as manifested in the miracles done in that Name by the Apostles; and the greater miracles of grace, in the experience of those who have found that Name at once the joy and strength of their life.

II. Consider His People: who are they? *"As many as received Him":*

i. His, not only by Creation and Redemption, but by conquest. His love has vanquished them, the Captives of Love! *"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."*—Hosea, xi., 4.

ii. Those whom He has saved from their sins; once they laboured and were heavy laden, but they came unto Him, took His Yoke upon them, and so they found rest for their souls.

iii. All the saints, the people of GOD; *"We are called by Thy Name; leave us not."*—Jer., xiv. 9.

III. Consider what He saves His people from, *"their sins."* Sin is the one great evil:

i. The cause of all the miseries and sorrows of earth.

ii. The cause of all the pains of hell.

iii. The cause of the Passion of JESUS.

Affections.—Adore the saving Name of JESUS; pray Him to be your JESUS; resolve to live more like one of His people, and to take His Name as the strength of your life, *"to do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS."*—Col., iii., 17.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VIEW OF SIN.

"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you."—Gen., xvii., 12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Mary Magdalene in the Pharisee's house, weeping at the Feet of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to hate our sins, and to repent of them for love of GOD.

I. Consider why CHRIST was circumcised. It was painful and humiliating, and it was not absolutely necessary for Him, for it was the acknowledgment of sin, and He was free from sin. Then why? Some would say, to fulfil the law. Yes; but to go deeper, we may find two causes: Love for us; Hatred of sin. Both are manifested in the Circumcision:

i. Love for any one impels us to delight in suffering pain and humiliation for them; and so our lesson from the Circumcision seems to be a hatred of sin, which arises from love of GOD.

ii. People hate sin for four reasons, only one of which is a worthy one: (a.) from fear of hell; (b.) from the grace that is lost; (c.) from the trouble it brings, even in this world; (d.) from the love of GOD. The first three are selfish motives; the last alone is worthy of the Christian.

II. Consider the two great patterns of Penitence in the Gospel:

i. S. Mary Magdalene, humbling herself before all in Simon's house, weeping for her sins, and manifesting her hatred of sin; but from what motive? Our LORD tells us why she wept: it was from love.

ii. S. Peter, outside the High Priest's palace, weeping bitterly for his sin. Why? That look of JESUS' had pierced his heart, and awakened his love.

iii. What is the motive of your penitence? What pain or humiliation has your love led you to, as a proof of your hatred of sin? Do you say it is not necessary? The Circumcision, the first blood-shedding of CHRIST, was not necessary: it was the sign of His love.

III. *"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."*—S. John, xiv., 15. This supplies a simple test as to whether we love Him:

i. Consider the power of love for a person: we cannot bear to be separated from them; their slightest wish is law; there is a delight in suffering for them. So our LORD proves His love: now, by dwelling in us; on Calvary, by suffering for us.

ii. What rouses hate? That which comes between us and the object of our love. There is only one thing that can come between us and GOD—sin. Do we hate sin because we love GOD?

iii. JESUS loved us, and hated sin; and what followed? Suffering and humiliation, voluntarily endured. If we are trying to be like Him, we shall voluntarily accept pain and shame, on account of sin and love; and we shall keep His commandments.

Affections.—Make these resolves for the new year—to love Him more in our daily lives, and, therefore, to hate sin; and to accept pain and humiliation as the proof of our love, and hate; thank Him for this His first blood-shedding for you.

JANUARY SECOND.

OUR CONFLICT WITH SATAN.

"Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him and smote the nail into his temples."—Judges, iv., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Sisera sleeping in Jael's tent, and read Judges, iv., 17–22.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage and decision in your warfare with Satan. Sisera, the great persecutor of Israel, is a type of Satan; Jael, of a soul in captivity to sin.

I. Consider the means by which Sisera obtained admission into Jael's tent:

i. There was peace between them; but there ought not to have been, for Jael was in covenant with Israel, and Sisera was their hereditary foe; so it is now with numbers, peace between them and Satan, instead of the war to which they were pledged in Baptism.

ii. Sisera appears at the door and gains admittance, either by appealing (a.) to her pity, or (b.) to her fear, for if she refused him, what was to prevent him from killing her? So now, Satan often obtains entrance into our hearts by one of these devices: (a.) sometimes as an angel of light, (b.) sometimes threatening us; how often fear leads us into sin; fear of ridicule; fear of poverty; so the sin begins, which perhaps becomes habitual.

II. Consider what he demands when in the tent:

i. She gives him all he asks, her best. (Judg., iv., 19.) So Satan takes from us what ought to be given to God.

ii. Then Sisera tells her to *lie* as to her condition. Is there any man here? say no. So now, when Satan possesses the heart, he teaches us to be hypocrites,—to go through the forms of religion, to pretend all is well, and that he is not in our hearts and ruling our lives; when the call to repentance is heard, to say, no, so often and so loudly, that at last we believe it ourselves, and become self-deceived.

III. Consider Sisera's death:

i. He sleeps, and Jael has time to think; of the twenty years slavery, of his fierceness and strength, of her weakness; and then the inspiration comes from God, and she takes the nail and hammer, and he dies. So now, Satan sometimes seems to sleep, in times of freedom from temptation; times for us to think, resolve, and act; think of the slavery of the past, and of the certain slavery of the future, unless we rid ourselves of him, and then the thought comes from God, now, while he sleeps, is the time to crush him.

ii. If Jael had awakened Sisera, what chance would she have had? So we are not to wait till temptation is strong upon us, but, while it sleeps, to take the tent-pin of the Cross, and the hammer of a good resolve, and by an act of penitence, to slay our foe; to kill the sins of the past.

Affections.—Watchfulness against allowing temptations to enter your heart; promptitude and courage in repenting as soon as you have yielded; care never to be at peace with Satan, but to be true to your LORD, though it brings upon you the attacks of His enemy.

JANUARY THIRD.

ADAM, I.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."—Gen., iii., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Eve, standing by the Tree of Knowledge, listening to the serpent's words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace at once to put away every temptation.

I. Consider Adam's creation:

i. Why created? To fill the places of the fallen angels; to be the ancestor of JESUS.

ii. How created? In the image of GOD; in a state of grace.

iii. The perfection of his creation. Resplendent with all the beauty both of nature and of grace; greatness of knowledge; surpassing happiness in doing GOD's will; and to live for ever.

II. Consider Adam's trial:

i. The necessity of trial. It is a law of GOD; and so the commandment given him to keep, one thing he was to hold back from.

ii. The envy of the devil. He hates GOD, and wishes to spoil His work; he hates man, because he is to inherit the bliss he himself has forfeited; he desires all to be miserable, like himself.

iii. The temptation was from without, by Satan, through Eve. Almost all falls are from temptation by another, especially first falls.

III. Consider Adam's sin:

i. It was a sin of disobedience, and in such a small thing. All sin is disobedience.

ii. It was a sin of unbelief;—disbelieving what GOD had said about the penalty. So now, Satan tries to make us disbelieve in the punishment of sin.

iii. The temptation appealed to each part of the nature, and, like our LORD's, was three-fold:

(a) "*Good for food*": to the body—temptation of the flesh.

(b) "*Pleasant to the eyes*": to the soul—temptation of the world.

(c) "*To be desired to make one wise*": to the spirit—temptation of the devil.

iv. Eve adds to GOD's words. "*neither shall ye touch it*": Satan suggests a doubt of them, and explains them away. So now, in regard to all doctrines which are unpleasant.

v. Satan tempts Eve to sin, by little and little; the same order generally now:

(a.) He praises the tree, and she listens: ear.

(b.) He entices her to go and look at it: eye.

(c.) He entices her to touch it: touch.

(d.) He entices her to taste it: taste.

(e.) He entices her to tempt another.

Affections.—Fear lest we should sin against GOD; watchfulness against temptation; reverent faith in receiving GOD's words in their plain meaning; pray, "*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*"

JANUARY FOURTH.

ADAM, II.

"Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God."—Ezekiel, xxviii., 2, and read vv. 11-20, as a description of Lucifer.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Adam after his fall, mourning his sin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true penitence.

I. Consider some of the conditions of trial:

i. The state was three-fold: (a.) the angels, who fell, had no temptation from without, and none from within; it is difficult to estimate their trial, except that, as being outside of GOD until the Incarnation, there was always a possibility of evil, for all goodness is *in* Him; (b.) Adam fell, having temptation from without but none from within his nature; (c.) Cain fell, having temptation both from without and from within.

ii. The challenge of the good angels in their leader, S. Michael: Who is like GOD?

(a.) Lucifer said, I will be like GOD in power; and so he was cast out of heaven. (Ezek., xxviii., 2; Isai., xiv., 14.)

(b.) Adam said, I will be like GOD in wisdom; and so he was cast out of Eden. (Gen., iii., 5.)

(c.) Man must strive to be like GOD only in love; and so to regain heaven.

II. Consider some of the results of Adam's sin:

i. To Adam: (a.) Death; (b.) a life of toil and difficulty both from the earth, and from his own children; (c.) knowledge of evil, and desire for it; (d.) disorder of his faculties.

ii. To us: the same; as, when a man makes a disadvantageous covenant, his successors suffer; so sin entails misery on the sinner's posterity.

III. Consider some elements of Adam's penitence:

i. If ever man knew the grievousness of sin, it was Adam, who had been sinless; and there was no type of mercy for sin then, the only example, the fallen angels.

ii. The Lamb had been slain from the foundation of the world, and so JESUS was his Saviour.

iii. Then there was a new creation: the grace of contrition. Adam's was the first act of contrition, the first drop from that fountain which has been flowing ever since, the type of thousands of such acts of sorrow and love now daily made.

Affections.—Realize the weakness of your nature, and so "watch and pray"; remember you are to be like GOD in love, and so resolve to cultivate this virtue; bear patiently the sorrows and trials of life, as the due reward of sin; make an act of contrition for all your sins.

THE EVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE THE PREPARATION FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob."—Numb., xxiv., 17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi studying astronomy, and in their studies discovering the Star that led them to CHRIST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for light, that in your own life we may see how GOD'S Providence has been leading us to CHRIST.

Consider throughout the Octave of the Epiphany the history of the Magi as the history of our soul's life here.

I. The central event in the history of the world, and of each individual, is the Manifestation of JESUS CHRIST; and the Providence of GOD orders the circumstances of both as a preparation for this event. We may see this :

i. In the history of the world at the time of our LORD'S Birth. The researches of philosophy had led to the decay of heathen systems of religion, and to the general expectation of some great event. The extension of the Roman power, and the policy of the Empire, had prepared for the spread, throughout the world, of a universal religion. It was the fulness of time, and JESUS was manifested to the world.

ii. In the history of an individual nation: *e. g.*, that of the Magi. The habits and circumstances of the people for many centuries had led them to the especial study of the stars; the prophecies of Balaam (Numb., xxiv., 17), and of Daniel (Dan., ix., 24-27), indicating the manner and the time of CHRIST'S appearing, had pointed their hopes; and JESUS was revealed to them by a star.

iii. In the history of individuals: *e. g.*, S. Peter and his companions were fishermen, and by the miraculous draught of fishes they were prepared for the especial call of CHRIST to leave all and become fishers of men.

II. Consider how we may trace the same law in the lives of individuals now; *viz.*, that all things in our life, sometimes even our sins, are preparing us for the manifestation of CHRIST:

i. As S. Augustine looked back on his life, with all its sins, how he recognized GOD'S Hand in all, guiding him to the light!

ii. How often an apparent accident has been the means of leading us to CHRIST!—the chance meeting with some one who has influenced our life; how often we have overlooked these calls of GOD.

iii. Adore the merciful Providence of GOD which has watched over your life; think how, in great crises, that has really been guiding you to CHRIST; see how even some great fall has helped you, by making you more humble, more watchful, or leading you to true penitence.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for past mercies; sorrow for unfaithfulness in obeying GOD'S calls; resolve to accept with thankful joy GOD'S Providence in your life, even when it is the Cross.

THE EPIPHANY.

VOCATION.

"Walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called"—Eph., iv., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi recognizing the Star, and preparing at once to obey its call.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for light to know, and strength to follow, your Vocation.

The manifestation of CHRIST to the soul leads to the recognition of a Vocation in life. The Magi saw the Star, and it called them to leave their country, to undertake a long journey to seek CHRIST in Bethlehem. Like S. Paul, when we have heard the voice of JESUS, we must ask, "LORD, *what wilt thou have me to do?*"—Acts, ix., 6.

I. Consider what Vocation is. Choosing a path in life? No; GOD calling us to a life which He has chosen for us and for which He will supply us with all needful grace. GOD has a purpose for each soul, here and hereafter, a place marked out for us in the predestination of Divine love in heaven. If we do not rise up to that purpose, we forfeit this place. There are many different vocations in the natural life, to which parents or inclination may direct us; so also in the spiritual life, there are different paths by which GOD leads different souls.

i. The general Vocation in Baptism: we are all "*called to be Saints.*"—I. Cor., i., 2. There is no intermediate class between the elect and the lost.

ii. The particular Vocation: then we are called to live for GOD, and to work for GOD, in some especial state; *e. g.*, Matrimony, Holy Orders, Religious Life. We have to judge which will "serve better to godliness." (Art. XXXII.)

iii. When we know our particular Vocation, lesser calls arise from time to time to new works; in each of these we must listen for the Voice of the Holy Ghost saying, "*This is the way, walk ye in it.*"—Isaiah, xxx., 21.

II. Consider as to our Vocation:

i. It is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost; He is our Star.

ii. How glorious the thought! I have not to *choose*, but GOD *has chosen* for me, and if I ask will reveal it to me.

iii. We do not lose it by waiting, when Providence puts obstacles in the way, but are rather thus being prepared for it. If GOD calls, He will make the opportunity.

III. Consider some results of this:

i. All Vocations lead us to Bethlehem to CHRIST.

ii. Obedience to Vocation often brings involuntary suffering on others. How much those who loved the Magi may have felt the parting from them. And again, their obedience to Vocation caused the death of the Holy Innocents. But it brings blessings, even on those who suffer unwillingly, giving them a share in the sacrifice. The relations of the Magi, perhaps, learnt from them the Gospel of CHRIST; and the Holy Innocents became the first who died for CHRIST.

iii. We must walk worthy of our Vocation, for we shall be judged by it. The judgment will be a revelation of GOD's purpose for us, and of the capabilities of our soul—what we might have been.

Affections.—Examine whether GOD has called you to your present state of life, or to some other; whether you are walking worthy of your Vocation; pray for grace to live in continual reliance on the guidance of the Holy Ghost; resolve to listen more for GOD's calls.

JANUARY SEVENTH.

THE JOURNEY TO CHRIST.

"There came wise men from the East to Jerusalem."—S. Matt., ii., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi, persevering in their toilsome journey in spite of all difficulties.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of perseverance, and patient endurance of trials.

The Magi, having recognized their Vocation to seek for CHRIST, start on their journey.

I. Consider their journey to CHRIST :

i. Their detachment : they left all—their homes, their country, their friends, their possessions. If we are seeking CHRIST earnestly, is there not always something from which we need to keep ourselves detached ?

ii. Their obedience : they followed the guiding of the Star ; they knew not whither ; it might lead them to danger, or even to death. So must we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit ; we know not where it will lead us, into what danger ; but we know it *will* lead us to death, death to the world, that we may have life in CHRIST.

iii. Their perseverance : after the first revelation of their Vocation they went on without any further encouragement ; they probably saw no more of the Star till they reached Bethlehem. So we must not expect continual encouragements ; if GOD has revealed His Will to us, that Will cannot change, and we must persevere in obedience.

II. Consider some of the difficulties and trials of their journey :

i. They had lost sight of the Star which called them. How like a trial in our spiritual life, when the first fervour of devotion passes away, and we are left to the ordinary means of grace, and to the struggle with coldness, and distraction in prayer.

ii. The spiritual deadness of Jerusalem. They expected, perhaps, to find all adoring the new-born King. How real a trial in our life is the spiritual apathy, or unreality, of those around us in the Church.

iii. The bad example of the Priests, who could point the way to Bethlehem, to CHRIST, but did not go themselves. We must suffer often from the inconsistency of those who teach the truth, but do not follow their own teaching.

III. Consider the helps they used in finding CHRIST :

i. They went to Herod. So we are to use natural helps put in our way by Providence.

ii. They consulted the Priests. Spiritual helps and means of grace are not to be neglected on account of the unworthiness of the Minister.

iii. The Star re-appeared. A reward for persevering in obedience, and the faithful use of all means, both natural and spiritual, within their reach. So at times, if we are faithful, the old joy and fervour returns.

Affections.—Pray for the graces of detachment, obedience, and perseverance ; make an act of resignation to GOD's Will in regard to coldness and all trials ; resolve to use all means in your power, and to persevere in the path of Vocation.

JANUARY EIGHTH.

THE FINDING OF CHRIST.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His Mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."—S. Matt., ii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi, after their long journey, gazing upon the Child JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your journey in life may lead you to CHRIST, both here, and in heaven.

I. Consider the Joy of finding CHRIST. It was a joy of contrast:

i. The Magi felt that joy increased by the remembrance of the difficulties and perils of their search.

ii. Our joy in every fresh apprehension of CHRIST here must be enhanced by contrast with the doubts and perplexities which beset us in our search for truth. *"Joy and peace in believing."*—Rom., xv., 13.

iii. Our joy in gazing upon CHRIST through eternity in the Kingdom of His Glory will have, as one element, the remembrance of the toils and sorrows of the earthly pilgrimage which brought us there; for, *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."*—Ps., cxxvi., 5.

II. The surprise of finding CHRIST:

i. The Magi expected to find the King of the Jews surrounded by the grandeur of earthly royalty; they found a Child in the house of poverty.

ii. When we find CHRIST as the King of our hearts now, how different all is from the expectation with which we set out: we looked for external peace, and lo! a sword is put into our hands, that we may fight for Him (S. Matt., x., 34); we longed for rest, and we are called to work for Him (S. Matt., xx., 1-9).

iii. When we find CHRIST as the King of that *"Land that is very far off,"* how different will his beauty be from our expectations: for *"eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him."*—I. Cor., ii., 9.

III. The result of finding CHRIST:

i. The Magi worshipped Him, and presented their gifts.

ii. All calls, all journeys here, must lead us *now* to CHRIST, with gifts—ourselves, our souls, our bodies; all we are, all we have.

iii. *Then* the occupation of heaven will be the worship through eternity of Him Whom we sought and found here in time.

Affections.—Joy at every new revelation of CHRIST; resignation to the heaviness of the night of the world, in the hope of the joys of the morning of eternity; adore the love of GOD, in manifesting Himself under the humble form of a little Child.

JANUARY NINTH.

BETHLEHEM.

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem."—S. Luke, ii, 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Child with Mary His Mother, at Bethlehem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that Bethlehem may be your Home, with JESUS, and Mary, and Joseph, and the Angels.

I. Consider Bethlehem, as the type of the Church :

- i. The Home of JESUS : where He may always be found.
- ii. The Home of the Saints : (Mary and Joseph), and the Angels.
- iii. Your Home : do you love this home ?

II. Consider Bethlehem, as the type of the Holy Eucharist :

- i. The House of Bread : the Bread of Life. (S. John, vi., 51.)
- ii. The House of Attraction : drawing there the Shepherds and the Magi, the representatives of the Jewish and Gentile world. (S. John, xii., 32 ; Hosea, xi., 4.)
- iii. The House of Adoration : there they worshipped Him.

III. Consider Bethlehem, as the type of the Inner life :

- i. The Cave of Simplicity : the straw in the manger, the beasts in the stall, all so ordinary.
- ii. The Cave of Hiddenness : nothing to attract the attention of the world, nothing that the world could recognize.

iii. The Cave of Inner Glory : darkness without, but *all* glory within. The King's daughter is all glorious *within*, outwardly not different from others.—(Ps. xlv., 13.) So there was darkness over the land of Egypt, but light in the dwellings of Israel. (Ex., x., 23.)

IV. If we are to come to Bethlehem, we must have :

- i. Detachment ; we must leave our own country, the world.
- ii. Endurance ; we must undertake a long, toilsome journey.
- iii. Generosity ; we must bring our offerings.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, and love, in the Church, as your Mother's Home ; adore our Blessed LORD, beneath the humble veils of bread and wine, present in the H. E. ; pray for simplicity, hiddenness, detachment, endurance, and generosity.

JANUARY TENTH.

THE THREE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

"They presented unto Him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."—S. Matt., ii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi, offering their gifts in recognition of the three-fold office of our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that JESUS may be your Prophet, Priest, and King.

The three gifts may be regarded as setting forth our LORD in His three Offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King.

I. Gold, the symbol of sovereignty ; shewing that they acknowledged Him as their King. Consider that as a King He demands :

i. Honour. Do you honour Him, by making all else in your life give place to Him ?

ii. Obedience. Do you take His Will as the rule of your life, trying to obey, not some, but all His commandments ?

iii. Service. What work are you doing for Him ? How much of your time is spent in His service ?

II. Frankincense, the symbol of the offering of sacrifice ; their recognition of His Priesthood. Consider our LORD as your Great High Priest, therefore :

i. The Intercessor ; offering the merits of His life and death, with your poor prayers and works ; bearing you on His Heart before the throne of God.

ii. The Absolver ; washing away your sins in His own Precious Blood.

iii. The Bestower of Benediction ; His last act on earth, the lifting up His Hands in benediction ; His Blessing, if you will, always on your life.

III. Myrrh, the symbol of bitterness and mortification, setting forth His Office as a Prophet ; The Founder of a new School, the School of the Cross. Consider that :

i. He taught, *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow Me."*—S. Luke, ix., 23. He taught the law of the Cross.

ii. He practised what He taught, and lived a life of daily self-restraint and mortification ; He lived the life of the Cross.

iii. He suffered for what He taught ; He died the death of the Cross.

Affections.—Make acts of love, honour, and self-oblation, to JESUS, your King ; pray Him to take away your sins, and to fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace ; resolve to follow His teachings more earnestly, especially in patiently bearing your Cross.

JANUARY ELEVENTH.

THE THREE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."—I. Cor., xiii, 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi offering their gifts, and so showing their own faith, hope, and charity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for these three great Virtues.

The three gifts may be regarded as setting forth the exercise of the theological Virtues.

I. Myrrh is the symbol of Faith in a crucified LORD :

i. Myrrh tells of disappointment : and what have we to help us to bear our failures in this world but faith in the joys of eternity ? *"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."*—I. S. John, v., 4.

ii. Myrrh tells of suffering : what is the balm of suffering but the faith that *"our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* ?—II. Cor., iv., 17.

iii. Myrrh tells of death : it prefigured the offering which was to be brought for our LORD's burial (S. John, xix., 39) ; and we, too, must die ; and what robs death of its terrors but faith ? *"I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."*

II. Frankincense is the symbol of Hope :

i. Frankincense rises toward heaven and disappears : the type of our hopes, which must all be set on heavenly things. *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."*—Col., iii., 1.

ii. Frankincense symbolizes Prayer : *"Let my Prayer be set forth before Thee as incense"* (Ps. cxli., 2) ; and prayer is the exercise of Hope.

iii. Frankincense symbolizes an acceptable oblation : we make all our poor offerings to GOD in the *hope* of acceptance through the merits of His dear Son.

III. Gold is the symbol of Love ; the Sovereign Virtue :

i. Gold is purified by fire : our love has to be tested in the furnace of this world's temptations.

ii. Gold is the emblem of union : it is the medium of intercourse throughout the nations of the world ; Love binds the Saints together, and binds them to GOD in the unity of the Body of CHRIST ; like cement, it binds the living stones together in the walls of that New Jerusalem, whose very streets are paved with gold. (Rev., xxi., 21.)

iii. Gold is the most precious of metals : Love, the greatest of the three Virtues. (I. Cor., xiii., 13.)

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and love ; resolve that during this festival you will in some definite way exercise each of these three Virtues.

JANUARY TWELFTH.

THE THREE NOTABLE DUTIES.

"They presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."—S. Matt, ii, 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi offering their gifts, and so in type fulfilling the three duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may fulfil these duties more faithfully.

The three gifts may be regarded as setting forth the three notable duties, enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount. (S. Matt., vi, 1-19)

I. Gold is the type of charity, and so of almsgiving: our duty to our neighbour: we may give:

i. Our gold: it is often our temptation, but out of it may be made our Crown.

ii. Our time and strength in work for others.

iii. Neither of these is true almsgiving without love (I. Cor., xiii., 3): we must give our sympathy, have compassion on our neighbour. (S. Luke, x., 33.)

II. Frankincense is the type of all oblations for acceptance; so of Prayer, our duty to GOD: what can we offer?

i. Prayer: (Ps. cxli., 2; Rev., viii., 3-4.) Consider the power of prayer.

ii. The Holy Eucharist: that One oblation from which all other offerings derive their efficacy; the Church's Prayer-Meeting.

iii. All our actions: "*whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS*"—Col., iii., 17, and so fulfil the Apostolic injunction to "*pray without ceasing.*"—I. Thess., v., 17.

III. Myrrh is the type of self-restraint and mortification, and so of Fasting; our duty to ourselves: consider this demands:

i. Self-discipline; the want of this is the cause of all our sin, what we need is, generally, not more grace, but to use more the grace we have; to do this requires a habit of self-discipline.

ii. Penitence: myrrh is the great emblem of penitence; it was used to preserve the dead body from corruption; it exudes of itself from the tree; like that grace which can raise the dead soul to life, the grace of contrition, which flows from the Tree of the Cross.

iii. Obedience: in keeping all the laws of the Church, all the precepts of our LORD; and so in fasting.

Affections—Examine how these duties have been performed in the past, and make acts of contrition for their neglect; pray for strength, and resolve to be more faithful in the future.

OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

THE RETURN HOME.

"And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."—S. Matt., ii., 12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Magi, after the warning dream, journeying home by another way.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, in returning to your duties in the world, you may manifest before men some of the glories of CHRIST.

I. Consider that they went back by another way:

i. Because of Herod: many a Herod is waiting to kill the young Child in our hearts, to rob us of the gifts we have received from Him; let us take heed how we go back, on our watch especially against that danger of reaction which is so common after a festival.

ii. Because, having found CHRIST, there was no need of the helps used before; no longer the circuitous journey, asking where is He? but straight home by another and better way.

iii. Because now JESUS Himself is the Way: when we have found Him, He tells us, "*I am the Way.*"—S. John, xiv., 6. We are to walk in Him.

II. Consider their life in their own country:

i. Witnessing before all men of what they had seen and heard.

ii. We must go back home to the same work, the same trials, the same temptations, but by another way; to bear all in the power of CHRIST, to do all for the glory of CHRIST.

iii. We must go home to wait for that next great call of GOD, not to the Manger of Bethlehem, but to the Epiphany of heaven.

III. Consider their *own* country, into which they departed, as that country of which we are citizens, and of which JESUS is the King, Heaven.

i. When we have found CHRIST here, this world will indeed no longer be our *own* country, our home, but the place of our exile.

ii. They departed Home; our home is in heaven; we must wait ready to depart there. (Phil., iii., 20; II. Cor., v., 1.)

iii. All Vocations lead us to the place marked out for us by GOD's love in heaven; the journey, which we begin here in following CHRIST, has no end, for in heaven they "*follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.*"—Rev., xiv., 4.

Affections.—Resolve to watch against the temptation which you think most likely to meet you after this festival; pray that you may shew forth to others in your life what you have learnt from JESUS and the wise men; thanksgiving for all the lessons and blessings of the Epiphany.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE OBJECT OF LIFE.

"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—S. Luke, ii., 49.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in the Temple uttering these, the first recorded words of His Life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may seek first the Kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness

The secret of success in life is having an object; a life without an object is generally a miserable failure; if we read the biographies of the world's great men, the one feature, common to all, which strikes us is that they had an object; for which they worked perhaps from youth, and which they kept ever before them; and as we study the characters of men, we find many a one, with great abilities, great promises, great opportunities, was a failure, because he lacked an object. The object is often the key to the life.

I. In the first half of the Christian year we are studying our LORD's life, the greatest of all lives, "*Vita vite nostræ*"; it is important, in order to understand it, to start with the key, the object, that we may observe how consistently it was carried out; these, the first recorded words of JESUS, give us that key—His Father's Will. Consider!

i. The prophecy: "*Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy Will, O My God.*"—Ps. xl., 7-8.

ii. The first words of His life: "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?*"—S. Luke, ii., 49.

iii. The declared object of His life: "*My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*"—S. John, iv., 34.

iv. The last words of His life: "*Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.*"—S. Luke, xxiii., 46.

II. What is the object of our life? Consider the different lives which the world calls great, search out the object in each:

i. Pleasure: but pleasure's glow passes, and its votaries are left like withered plants, their lives a failure.

ii. Popularity: but it changes, or at the height of fame a man dies.

iii. Riches: they cannot give happiness, they cannot be carried away.

iv. None of these objects ever bring true happiness here, and, when viewed in the light of eternity, how worthless! how foolish! There is only one object worthy of life, to do our Father's Work, to fulfil the purpose for which we were created.

III. Consider the difference between the life of a Saint and of a worldling. it is not a difference of temperament, nor talents, nor circumstances, but of *object*: the one, the glory of GOD, the other the glory of self; the one God's Will, the other self-will.

IV. The noblest life, even by the testimony of unbelievers, the life of JESUS CHRIST, the most truly manly, the most perfect, we know its object; take then the motto of JESUS for the motto of our life, and when others wonder at us, because we follow not the maxims of the world, let this be the answer: "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?*"

Affections.—Adore the Will of GOD; offer yourself to do His Will; pray that you may ever know His Will; resolve to make His work the business of your life.

FIRST MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE LOSS OF JESUS.

"And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple."—S. Luke, ii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate SS. Mary and Joseph in sorrow seeking for JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for watchfulness, lest unawares JESUS be lost.

I. Consider the circumstances of the loss of JESUS :

i. It was in Jerusalem, the Holy City: how often the soul loses JESUS, not in despised Nazareth where we expect temptation, but in Jerusalem, in the midst of Church privileges, familiarity with which has lulled us into a false security.

ii. It was during the great festival of the year: there is the danger of the excitement of great festivals so engrossing our thoughts, that we forget, and so lose, JESUS; and not until the festival has given place to the calm routine of our ordinary life, do we find out our loss. A time of joy demands more watchfulness than a time of penitential sorrow.

II. Consider the circumstances of the recovery of JESUS :

i. They turned back at once to seek for Him, and found Him, *not in the city*, but in the Temple: so we must not dare to go a step further without our LORD, but, when we have discovered our loss, must retrace our steps, and seek for JESUS, not in the world, but, where He may always be found, in the House of GOD, in prayer and meditation.

ii. They sought Him sorrowing: we shall never find Him unless we begin our search with penitential sorrow; we must make an act of contrition for our negligence and unfaithfulness, and then we shall again find our LORD.

III. JESUS may be lost to the soul :

i. By an act of mortal sin: this drives Him forth from the soul, as the Jews drove him from their city, with cries of "*crucify Him!*"

ii. By long indulgence in wilful venial sin: a *habit* of venial sins is quite inconsistent with love of CHRIST.

iii. By being so engrossed in the attractions and excitements of the world, that He is forgotten: how often, without any actual sin to startle us, we thus grow indifferent to JESUS.

Affections.—Resolve often to search your heart to see if JESUS is still there; to be on your guard against excitement; pray that He may be the Companion of your daily life; make an act of contrition for past negligence.

FIRST TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE DUTY OF MEDITATION.

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."—S. Luke, ii., 19. *"His Mother kept all these sayings in her heart."*—S. Luke, ii., 51.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the B. V. Mary meditating on the mysterious events of her Son's life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to persevere faithfully in the systematic practice of Meditation.

Meditation is the exercise of all the powers of the soul in the grasp of divine truth, and especially of the Memory, Intellect, and Will.

I. Consider how faithfully and perseveringly the man of business uses this exercise on the plans and schemes of this world; he does not talk much about what he is going to do, but by meditation forms a well-digested plan of operations, using :

i. His memory: he recalls all he knows concerning the venture on which he is engaged, all the information he has been able to collect.

ii. His intellect: he considers the various details in all their bearings, with the greatest patience and care.

iii. His will: he finally resolves on his course of action, and proceeds to apply the results, at which he has arrived, to the practical requirements of his business.

II. Consider how the B. V. Mary teaches us the duty of Meditation on the life of her Son :

i. She did not talk about the great things she had witnessed; how often our religious impulses evaporate in words, how fond we are of talking about our spiritual experiences, and the events that take place in our Church; our LORD continually enjoins spiritual reserve, "*see thou tell no man.*" (S. Matt., viii., 4; S. Mark, v., 43; S. Luke, viii., 56.) S. Mary *kept* all these things, we do not *keep* them, because we are so anxious to speak of them.

ii. She "*pondered them in her heart,*" i. e., She meditated on them, using :

(a.) Her memory: often to recall them.

(b.) Her intellect: comparing them with the prophecies of the Messiah, and considering their bearing on her own life, and experience.

(c.) Her will: applying them to her own circumstances, and exercising her faith, hope, and love.

iii. Thus Meditation formed her spiritual life, and prepared her for the sorrows of the Passion, and for the joys of heaven.

III. Consider how we may thus learn, both from the Saints and the world, the value and importance of meditation :

i. The world scoffs at meditation, as religious dreaming, and yet exercises it most thoroughly in the things of the world.

ii. Talking of spiritual things is generally weakening to the spiritual life, it is the dissipation of the soul, the pouring out its forces, instead of storing them up for use.

iii. We must not only *think* about the life of JESUS, but *ponder*, i. e., meditate, using our memory, intellect and will; and arriving, not at a dreamy sentimentalism, but a practical *imitation* of the life of our LORD.

Affections.—Thank GOD for the revelation of divine truth in the Bible; pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, and resolve not merely to read the facts of the life of our LORD, but to keep all these things, pondering them in your heart, and endeavouring to practice them in your daily life.

FIRST WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE VIRTUES OF THE HIDDEN LIFE.

"Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."—Isaiah, xlv., 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD at Nazareth, hidden from the world, living in the fellowship of divine love.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may cultivate more the virtues of the hidden life.

The greater part of our LORD's life on earth was passed at Nazareth, the place of degradation and obscurity, in the practice of interior virtue, to teach us, that in GOD's sight, *what we ARE* is far more important *than what we DO*.

I. Consider some of the Exterior Virtues manifested at Nazareth :

i. Labour: JESUS would not be exempt from Adam's penance (Gen. iii., 19). He came to ennobel labour, to give it a new character and value; His work in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth was "Work in the presence of GOD," each act offered to His Father, to teach us how to make our work bear fruits in another world, to teach us to offer, in union with the acts of His perfect life, all that we do to GOD; so fulfilling the old proverb, and the Apostolic precept, "*pray without ceasing*"—I. Thess., v., 17, for with a spirit of oblation, "*laborare est orare.*"

ii. Poverty: JESUS came to teach man the true position of creatures in the economy of the universe, that their best use is often their non-use,—the law of detachment, that they are to be used only to supply man's needs, lest, being over-used, they become the objects of his idolatry.

iii. Hiddenness: the great feature of all GOD's works (the hiddenness of GOD's operations both in nature and grace), there was no anxiety to manifest Himself to the world, that others should appreciate His work; His Father would call Him forth at the appointed time, till then, He is content to be hidden. What a lesson to us, who too often think work wasted, if unknown!

II. Consider some of the Interior Virtues practised at Nazareth :

i. Simplicity: this is one of GOD's essential attributes, He is a pure Act and so cannot act a part, cannot *wear* a character; how perfect was the simplicity of every act of our LORD's life. Simplicity *is* humility: the world's motto even in religion, alas, is "*videri quam esse,*" let us try to *be* and not to *seem* to be; how much anxiety we show as to appearances, how little as to realities. Our LORD's life is the perfect example of simplicity.

ii. Devotion: JESUS spent those years in the joy of Communion with His Father, abiding in the divine fellowship in prayer and devotion; how easily we let our devotions be hurried or crowded out by work, and yet all our work for GOD is really done in the workshop of our own soul; active work bears the impress of the exact amount of its spiritual preparation, to put work before devotions is to contradict the teaching of our LORD's life.

iii. Patience: thirty years of waiting, in humble obscurity and earnest prayer, for three years of work; yet that work was to move the world; we may trace in the lives of nearly all those Saints whom GOD has raised up for some special work for Him the same long preparation; *e. g.*, Ignatius, Savonarola, Lacordaire, &c. How those thirty years of waiting ought to quell our impatience, and rebuke our ambition; let us not chafe at the time spent in preparation, let us only fear lest when the call comes to work we should be still unprepared.

Affections.—Thank our LORD for the lessons of Nazareth, examine yourself as to these virtues, and pray for grace to cultivate them more perseveringly.

FIRST THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

NAZARETH AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."—S. Matt. xi., 29.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in the H. E. practising the same virtues of the interior life as at Nazareth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in our Eucharists we may not only feed on our LORD, but learn of him. There is a close parallel between our LORD's life at Nazareth, and His presence in the H. E.

I. Consider how in the H. E. our LORD observes now the same laws that He taught in His hidden life at Nazareth :

i. Simplicity: no means of manifesting Himself to the eye of man, and yet accomplishing such results in man. "*Deus, semper agens, semper quiescens.*" He is the Bread of life, the principle of life, and yet in the H. E. contented to be deprived of the exhibition of this life; always working for us, and yet always resting in the quiet calm of the Sacramental species.

ii. Poverty: His poverty in the H. E. seems almost to exceed that of Nazareth, present there under the humble forms of bread and wine, the common elements of daily food.

iii. Hiddenness: still the great law of His work; "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"—S. John, iii., 8. The secret working of grace in the hearts of men, the hidden miracles of grace, done daily by our LORD through our Communions.

iv. Obedience: as at Nazareth He obeyed SS. Joseph and Mary, so now He is obedient to the words spoken by the lips of His Priests, to the wishes of His Communicants; helpless, as a little child, in the H. E., He appeals to the devotion and care of those He loves, but who, alas, often love not Him.

v. Abandonment: at Nazareth He was abandoned by the world He came to save, it threatened Him with death when He crossed its path, and treated Him with neglect when He withdrew from it. So in the H. E. now, a few faithful ones adore, but the majority pass Him by: see an average congregation on a Communion Sunday, why are they all hurrying out in the midst of the Service? What has happened? JESUS is coming, and they wish to get away from Him: go into that church at the early Celebration, the morning is cold, the majority love their own comfort better than JESUS, and so leave Him to come and go, unwelcomed and unthanked. How many who have *never* in their lives received the H. E., and yet call themselves Christians!

vi. Patience: Where is this virtue more manifested than in the H. E.? neglected, abandoned, even blasphemed, He withdraws not Himself;—as He bore all with patience at the hands of men, when on earth, so now his love triumphs over man's ingratitude.

II. Consider that in the H. E. our LORD is not only our Food, but our Teacher. He has deprived Himself of the power of utterance, but He teaches there by Silent Example; oh, let us come, not only to feed on Him, but to learn from Him the laws of His Kingdom.

Affections.—Adore His silent example; thank Him for His love and patience toward you; make an act of contrition for all neglect of the H. E.; resolve as a preparation for your next Communion especially to practice some one of these virtues.

FIRST FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE HOME OF JESUS.

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."—S. Luke, ii., 51.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Home of JESUS at Nazareth, when the sun was sinking behind the hills, and the day's work was done, and JESUS laid His Head on Mary's knee, while Joseph sat by and gazed with tender love on that happy scene, lit up by the soft rays of the light of eventide—the Home of Peace.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace so to fulfil your duties in family life that your Home may be like this.

The Home at Nazareth, the pattern of each Christian Home, there we may see :

I. JESUS, childhood's ideal. Consider :

i. His Love: as He looked up in Mary's face, how he loved her, and showed that love in a thousand affectionate ways !

ii. His Consideration: so thoughtful for both Mary and Joseph, always trying to save them pain ; ah, He knew what pain His Blessed Mother must one day suffer, He would spare her all, then.

iii. His Obedience: so unquestioning, so cheerful.

II. Mary, the perfect Mother. Consider :

i. Her Tenderness: how she loved Joseph and her Child, and thought of little ways of showing that love ; so gentle, so full of patience when poverty or sorrow was their lot.

ii. Her Watchfulness: lest any harm should happen to the Child of her love, as He went to the village school, or played with the other boys, or worked with S. Joseph,—how often, as He slept, at night she watched His slumbers.

iii. Her Happiness: how perfect it was, in having such a Son, and such a home ; how she looked forward to those happy evenings when work was done ; yes, her life at Nazareth was like the long peaceful calm, which precedes a great storm ; over the happy Home the storm-clouds were gathering, for the sword was to pierce her soul, in the Passion of her Son.

III. Joseph, the faithful Guardian :

i. His Privilege: as the Guardian of that Home ; allowed to watch over the childhood of the Son of God ; what a privilege God gives to faithful parents, in allowing them to bring up children for Him, for heaven ; the joy of being able to say in the great Day, "*Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*"—Heb., ii., 13.

ii. His Responsibility: so many things threatened the life of that Child, the peace of that Home ; how many evil powers threaten the life of each child now, how great is the responsibility of parents to guard their children from all the various forms of temptation which surround them, to bring them up for God ; God seems to say of each, "*Take this child away, and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages.*"—Ex., ii., 9.

iii. His Blessing: to have such a Son to minister to him in his old age, and death ; what a strange death was his ! between JESUS and Mary ! the LORD of Life holding his hand, giving him the last benediction ! then indeed was literally fulfilled the promise, "*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing ; Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness*"—Ps. xli., 3. So may a good parent look forward to the comfort of his children in old age.

Affections.—Examine how you have fulfilled your duties in the various relationships of family life ; pray that you may learn from the Home of JESUS your duty ; resolve to practice more faithfully the virtues there exhibited.

FIRST SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

OUR LORD'S BAPTISM.

"And Jesus, when He was baptized went up straightway out of the water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him : and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."—S. Matt., iii, 16-17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing in the Jordan, and, as the water is poured upon Him by the Baptist, the manifestation of the Voice of the Father, and descent of the Holy Ghost taking place.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have spiritual capacity to hear and see the manifestations of GOD's glory.

I. Consider the hiddenness of GOD's manifestation :

On the three occasions on which the Bath Kol was heard in our LORD's life, at His Baptism, Transfiguration, and in the Temple on Palm-Sunday, inaugurating His three offices as Priest, Prophet, and King (S. Matt., iii., 17 ; S. Luke, ix., 35 ; S. John, xii., 28), it was only to the trained ears of His faithful servants that it was audible as the Voice of GOD ; as in the Temple, some said it thundered, and others that an angel spake, so now, by the multitude who stood by, it was probably unheard ; by the prepared ear only was it recognized.

i. To the Baptist : it was the end and reward of all his work ; he knew he was to be the Forerunner of the CHRIST, but that he was to baptize the CHRIST, and hear the Voice, and see the Vision, this was indeed beyond his highest hopes. So it is always with the manifestations of GOD's glory ; hidden from the dull crowd, they are revealed only to the purified heart, as a reward far exceeding its greatest expectation.

ii. But there were other ears listening, other eyes watching ; the powers of darkness had heard the angels' song at the Birth of CHRIST, had followed the light of the Child's glory into the darkness of Egypt, had watched with anxious curiosity His mysterious growth in the obscurity of Nazareth, and now were waiting in expectant fear for some further manifestation ; their ears caught the words, their eyes saw perhaps the Vision, and it was to them the signal of attack.

II. Consider what the manifestation was :

i. The Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Son of GOD : "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*"—Rom., viii., 14. The Spirit was CHRIST's by right, it is ours by gift ; it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which at once constitutes our sonship, and enables us to live as sons of GOD.

ii. The Voice of the Father proclaiming, *This is My Beloved Son* : that Voice rings through the Spirit-world at the Baptism of each child of GOD, ratifying the Sacramental act of the Priest, proclaiming the acceptance in the Beloved. (Eph., i., 6.)

III. Consider the result of the manifestation :

i. Diabolical attack : every fresh gift of grace will attract the notice and assault of the powers of evil ; just as bats, and moths, and other creatures of the darkness, dash themselves against the light, until they either put it out or fall scorched and vanquished by its brightness ; so is it in the struggle between the hosts of darkness and the children of the light.

ii. The testing of the sonship : the devils hear the proclamation of the divine sonship, and it is an invitation to them to test its truth, and so they come with their temptations to try to separate the son from His Father's covenant, by sin. Yes, if thou be the son of GOD, having the Spirit of GOD, thou must follow the steps of the Only-Begotten Son, through diabolic temptation and persecution, first to the Cross, there to conquer death by dying, and then to the Throne, there to reign in life eternal.

Affections.—Gratitude for the gift ; pray for grace to realize and cherish it ; resolve to prepare thy soul for temptation, and to live in the strength of divine sonship.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

HUMANITY'S COMPLAINT.

"They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her.....Mine hour is not yet come."—S. John, ii., 3-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, in the miracle of turning the water into wine, manifesting at once His glory and the purpose of His work.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize your own poverty, and seek the riches of His Kingdom.

In this His first miracle our LORD foreshadows His whole work, and reveals the purpose of the Incarnation—to change the water of earth into the wine of heaven.

I. *"They have no wine."* Consider this as the cry of humanity before the Incarnation:

i. Visions of greatness had arisen; mighty empires, and great triumphs in art and literature; but, ever and anon, as the misery of man without God was realized, as the moral degradation of a noble nature was manifested, this confession of poverty was wrung from the heart and conscience of mankind.

ii. *"Mine hour is not yet come."* For how many weary years was this God's answer to the complaint that arose from the sin-stricken earth. Man must learn by bitter experience his need, his own utter insufficiency, he must be taught to *hope* for a Saviour; but, when man was ready, "*when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*"—Gal., iv., 4-5.

iii. And this was the purpose of the Incarnation: to change the water of human nature into the wine of the Kingdom of God. Jesus took our nature upon Him, but how changed did it become!—dwelt in by the Eternal Word, anointed by the Holy Ghost, Humanity found its ideal and end in the Person of JESUS CHRIST.

II. *"They have no wine."* Consider this as the cry of the world now:

i. JESUS is in the world, but the world *will* try to live without Him; it has its own codes of morality, and schemes of philanthropy, instead of His religion; but, ever and again, as some noble nature wakes up to the utter failure of all this either to satisfy man's heart, or to transform his life, the old complaint bursts from the throbbing heart, the confession of poverty, *"THEY have no wine."*

ii. *"Mine hour is not yet come."* Not at first, does the darkness give place to light, is the water changed into wine. No, GOD is always the same; as He deals with humanity, so does He with the *individual*; the darkness must be felt, the poverty must be realized, before His hour comes to work the miracle of grace.

iii. And this is the purpose of the Church of CHRIST: to extend and apply to each soul the benefits of the Incarnation. The world was without GOD, and GOD took the world into Himself by the Incarnation. The sinner is without GOD in the world, and JESUS, by the ministry of His Church, comes into the sinner's soul, and, through the Sacraments of grace, *imparts* His own righteousness, and transforms the sinner into the saint.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for God's blessings in the Incarnation, and in the Church; realization of your own poverty, and weakness; resolve, in the means of grace, to seek for strength and transformation.

SECOND MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

GOD'S USE OF MEANS.

"The water that was made wine."—S. John, ii., 9

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate GOD using the dust of the ground, out of which to form Adam's body.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use faithfully all the means of grace placed within your reach by GOD.

GOD, although Creator of all things, wastes nothing, but continually uses the materials of a lower order for the production of something better. He might have made the wine out of nothing; in conformity with His own unvarying laws, He did not, but raised the element of water to wine..

I. Consider GOD's use of means as manifested in the creation of man :

i. In the work of the six days of restoration of the Chaos, described in Gen., i., the materials of the ruined world are used, and out of them is constructed the earth, fitted for the habitation of man.

ii. In the creation of Adam, GOD uses the dust of the earth to form his body, and creates only his soul.

iii. We may learn, then, that the use of means for producing results in the physical world is a law of GOD's operation.

II. So, also, in the Re-creation of man at the Incarnation :

i. The moral nature of man, created so perfect in Adam, was utterly corrupted and ruined by the Fall, and yet it was not cast away—GOD did not create a new order or race.

ii. But He chose out of fallen humanity that Body, Which, hypostatically united to the Eternal Word in the Incarnation, was to be raised to the throne of heaven.

iii. So that we learn that GOD uses means for the accomplishment of spiritual purposes.

III. The same law holds good in the creations of grace :

i. GOD does not cast off the ordinances of the Jewish Church, but raises them to the dignity of Christian Sacraments : the sacrifices find their consummation in CHRIST, the various types are fulfilled ;—as in this miracle, the water, which was the symbol of the old law which purified all things by water, but only by a ceremonial cleansing of the body, was changed into the wine, which symbolizes the Precious Blood of JESUS, which cleanses also the soul ; so throughout the old dispensation, its teachings were not rejected, but raised to their true fulness.

ii. So in the Sacraments, GOD could convey grace immediately to the soul, but he chooses to do it mediately, through the matter and form of the Sacraments, teaching us GOD's use of means for conveying grace to the soul, and those very means are taken from a lower order, and fitted by His benediction for their higher function, in analogy with His other operations.

iii. We must learn from this to avoid presumption, and humbly, patiently, and thankfully to use all the means of grace. GOD will work in us by His grace, if we fulfil His spiritual laws, but if we neglect to use the means He points out, we are violating those laws.

Affections.—Make acts of thanksgiving, humility, and patience, in regard to the use of the means of grace ; resolve to be more faithful, and pray for GOD'S blessing on the means you use.

SECOND TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE.*

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the Mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage."—S. John, ii., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, by His Presence at Cana, sanctifying and blessing Holy Matrimony.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to fulfil the duties of this Vocation.

AS OUR LORD, by His Baptism in the river Jordan, sanctified Water to the mystical washing away of sin, so, by His Presence and the working of His first miracle at Cana, did He sanctify and bless the holy estate of Matrimony, which had been instituted in the time of man's innocency, raising it to Sacramental dignity in the Christian Church.

I. Consider the Dignity of Marriage—as chosen by GOD to typify the greatest mysteries of our faith:

- i. It is a type of the Incarnation: the union between God and Humanity.
- ii. It is a type of CHRIST's union with the Church. (Eph., v., 23-28 and 32.
- iii. It is a type of our LORD's union with each individual soul through the Sacraments. (Rev., xix., 7.)
- iv. It is, in one sense, a type of the Holy Trinity: as setting forth the unity of family life.

II. Consider the Purposes of Marriage:

i. To people heaven: the means by which the places in heaven, from which the devil and his angels fell, are to be filled. Hence the privileges and responsibilities of marriage as regards the bringing up of children in the fear and nurture of the LORD. How sad if any be lost; how glorious in that day to say, "*Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*"—Heb., ii., 13.

ii. A remedy against sin: hence purity. "*Marriage is honourable in all.*"—Heb., xiii., 4. How watchful all should be to preserve that honour.

iii. For mutual comfort: we have seen (Pt. I.) that it is the type of the closest, dearest, most sacred relationships and unions, even those of GOD to man; how careful all should be never to allow anything to mar the perfection of the union!

III. Consider some of the Duties of Marriage:

i. Forbearance: how much sorrow and pain in married life might be avoided by the practice of this Virtue.

ii. Confidence: Love is almost impossible without trust; how many a misunderstanding between husband and wife might be removed, or altogether avoided by mutual confidence; how necessary a thing confidence is to every one, and this is one of GOD's appointed means of supplying the need.

iii. Sympathy: "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"—Gal., vi., 2. If this is a general law for all, how much more binding is it on husband and wife; how many a sorrow or disappointment may be robbed of half its pain by sympathy; this is the great power given to man by GOD to enable him to bear life's burdens: examine if you seek sympathy from any one else in preference to the one whom GOD has given you for help and comfort; if so, whose fault is it?

Affections.—Make an act of contrition for all past duties of this vocation which have been neglected; pray for grace to fulfil the duty of this estate in which you feel you have most failed; resolve to be watchful against some one temptation which besets you in your married life.

*This Meditation is of course intended only for those who are married.

SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE LAW OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN.

"The governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now"—S. John ii., 9-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate this Governor, who had tasted the wine, giving his testimony before all, as the type of Humanity confessing its experiences.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may choose the wine of sorrow which turns into joy, rather than that wine of pleasure which ends in pain; the wine of the Bridegroom of your soul, instead of the cup that the world offers.

These words spoken to the mysterious Bridegroom, who says nothing in reply, seem to be the very centre of this miracle; as though the whole were recorded for the sake of this testimony of the Governor of the feast; so short, and yet so complete; so soon arrived at, and yet true to the experience of every condition of man, in time and in eternity.

I. Consider the WORLD'S dealings with man, as summed up in these words: *"Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse."* It is the testimony of experience, promises ending in disappointment; *e. g. :*

i. The glow of pleasure seems so bright, but, when it is possessed, how soon it fades.

ii. The glory of success is enthralling, but it dies down quickly.

iii. The possession of riches to many seems happiness; it brings too often ever increasing cares.

iv. The cup of sin, in its first draught, tastes so sweet; but the dregs are unutterable misery.

II. Consider the experience of EARTH as to GOD'S dealings with man: *"Thou hast kept the good wine until now."* GOD'S gifts, in the using, grow with an ever-deepening joy; *e. g. :*

i. The Cross: how heavy at first, but at last the testimony is *"Thy Rod and Thy Staff they COMFORT me"*—Ps. xxiii., 4.

ii. The Bible: meditation at first so wearisome, but, as we persevere in the study of GOD'S Word, and heaven opens more and more to our gaze, the witness of the soul is *"How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*—Ps. cxix., 103.

iii. The Holy Eucharist: with each good Communion an ever-increasing experience of joy, till we exclaim again and again, *"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now."*

III. Consider the experience of HEAVEN: *"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now"* Will not this be our testimony as each joy of heaven is tasted at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb? The freedom from sin or the possibility of sinning; the beatification of every faculty; the possession of everything desired; the companionship of the Saints and Angels; but, when we reach the crowning joy of heaven, the consummation of all bliss, when our eyes see the King in His Beauty, the Vision of GOD, then, indeed, shall we have cause to say, *"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now,"* and this for eternity.

Affections.—Detachment from the world's gifts, and realization of their deceitfulness; thankfulness for the means of grace now within our reach, and for the hope of glory hereafter; resolve to seek the good Wine of CHRIST'S Kingdom now, in the various means through which our LORD offers it to the soul.

SECOND THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM OF THE SOUL

"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now."—S. John, ii., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, by the hands of His Ministers, giving the Chalice of Salvation, the good Wine of the Precious Blood, to faithful souls in the H. E.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may feel the poverty of your soul, and come there to JESUS to receive the riches of His grace.

The parallel between the marriage at Cana and the Holy Eucharist is very close. The beginning, the centre, of the miracles of grace, in the Church, is the H. E. ; there our LORD manifests forth His glory to His followers, and they learn, by its experience, to believe on Him more and more.

I. Consider the parallel of external circumstances :

- i. The H. E. is the marriage Feast of CHRIST with the faithful soul.
- ii. The Servants, who drew and ministered the wine, represent the Priests of the Church, by whom the H. E. is celebrated and administered.
- iii. S. Mary and the Disciples, who shared in the feast, represent the Saints with whom we communicate in the H. E.

II. Consider the parallel of interior experiences :

i. The Bridegroom is CHRIST (in this miracle the Bridegroom seems to be kept mysteriously out of sight until the Governor addresses to Him the words, *"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now,"* in order to indicate that the Bridegroom is CHRIST), the bride thyself, if thou wilt ; the H. E. is the pledge and means of union.

ii. The soul must realize and express its need, and seek there the gift of JESUS to supply it ; our communions must not only be acts of obedience, but means of grace.

iii. Each communion a dearer experience : the testimony of all who have tasted is that of the Governor of the feast—*"Thou hast kept the good Wine until now."*

III. Consider some points of Eucharistic teaching here :

i. The water for ceremonial purification is changed into the wine of the Precious Blood ; not only telling of the *need* of purification, as the Jewish rites did, but supplying the *means*.

ii. The miracle was effected by the obedience of the Servants to the Words of CHRIST ; so the consecration of the H. E. is effected by the exact obedience of the Priest, in using the Words, and doing the acts, that our LORD commanded.

iii. People can believe in the water becoming wine at the Word of CHRIST ; or in the water becoming blood by the act of Moses (Ex., vii., 20) ; so must we receive the plain Words of JESUS in regard to the H. E., *"This is My Blood"*—S. Matt., xxvi., 28 ; we must learn from the disciples, and experiencing the glory of that spiritual manifestation, must believe in Him.

Affections.—Desire for closer union with CHRIST ; examine as to the purity of heart with which you approach the H. E. ; resolve always to bring your needs to our LORD there ; thank Him for the great Gift of Himself.

SECOND FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

LESSONS OF OUR LORD.

"Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage."—S. John, ii., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, by His Presence at Cana, sanctifying the season of joy and festivity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in all times of joy you may remember the Presence of JESUS, and so may watch against excess.

Meditate on some of the lessons, as to our LORD Himself, taught at Cana.

I. Consider His sympathy with us :

i. It is supposed by some that the unexpected arrival of our LORD's party caused the wine to run short. If so, we may learn that when JESUS causes a need, it is with the intention of supplying it.

ii. It was not any great necessity which drew out our LORD's sympathy ; the failing of the wine would only have caused mortification, perhaps, to the bridegroom and bride, and spoiled some of the joy of the feast. We may thus learn that no want or trial of ours is too trivial for our LORD to care for ; that He sympathizes in our little mortifications and disappointments, as well as in our great sorrows. We may "*Cast ALL our care on Him ; for He careth for us.*"—

I. S. Pet., v., 7.

iii. "*If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*"—I. S. John, iv., 11. We learn, then, that we must imitate our LORD in this virtue, and sympathize with others, not only in great trials, but in little disappointments.

II. Consider His readiness to hear our prayers :

i. The expression of need, "*They have no wine,*" was enough, without any indication of how He was expected to supply it. So the best prayers are those which tell GOD of our needs, but leave GOD to answer according to His Will.

ii. Our LORD does not answer immediately, but waits until the need is imminent. So in prayer, He often leaves us to *feel* our poverty and weakness, but *His hour* will come to answer every prayer.

iii. He sends the answer through the ordinary channels of His Providence ; the Governor of the feast knew not of the miracle, because the wine came through the hands of the servants ; so the miracles of grace, performed in answer to prayer, are often unrecognized, because the gift is bestowed through some common-place means.

III. Consider how His Mission was to sanctify, by His Presence and Example, every condition of human life :

i. Everywhere the benediction of JESUS may be traced : He came, not only to teach man to die, but to teach man how to *live* ; Childhood, Youth, Manhood, Family life, Social life, Priestly life, Religious life, the life of labour, and the life of suffering, all receive their beauty and dignity from His touch ; His Presence is seen by the bed of sickness, and in the chamber of death ; whatever be the circumstances of our lives, we find that the life of JESUS has touched and raised them.

ii. In Cana we see Him sanctifying by His Presence the season of joy ; and yet perhaps at no time later in His ministry could He have done so in the same manner ; after the first year, a melancholy settled on His life, as the ingratitude of men manifested itself, which would have ill-befitted a time of festivity ; so we see He chooses the right time for each act of His life.

iii. In Cana also we see Him sanctifying by His Presence the Vocation of Marriage ; no condition or estate, on which the life of JESUS does not touch, on which the blessing of JESUS does not rest.

Affections.—Gratitude for the sanctifying influence of our LORD in all conditions of life ; pray for the gift of sympathy for others ; resolve to seek our LORD's help in the smaller trials of life.

SECOND SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

TEACHING BY WORD AND EXAMPLE.

"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."—S. John, ii., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the B. V. Mary saying these words to the servants.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may profit by her counsel.

These words have a peculiar interest, as being the only words of teaching by the B. V. Mary recorded in the Gospels. Her teaching was mostly by silent example, and, valuable as this one sermon of hers is, there are, even in this miracle, at least two lessons of example to the one instruction; thus, following her Divine Son, she began to *do*, before she began to *teach*. (Acts, i., 1.

I. Consider the one INSTRUCTION of the B. V. Mary, "*whatsoever He saith unto you, do it*":

- i. The only legacy of counsel she has left us, and yet how practical.
- ii. How different from what some uninspired writers have taught of her; she simply points to her Divine Son, and says, obey Him.
- iii. How thorough is her instruction in obedience; *whatsoever* He saith—there is no limitation.

II. Consider the Example of KINDNESS set by the B. V. Mary at Cana; she thinks of others and tries to help them in their need:

- i. Kindness is the secret of happiness: the world is an unhappy world because it is an unkind world; kindness differs somewhat from charity; it is the great virtue of family and social life; how much happiness and brightness seems to follow the steps of a kind-hearted person; it manifests itself in little things; what happiness to that family at Cana, the kind thought of our LORD's Mother caused.

- ii. Kindness is the great pioneer of the grace of Conversion: many a hard heart has been softened, and so prepared for the work of grace, by a few kind words; *e. g.*, the servants at Cana were prepared by the kindness of S. Mary to receive and obey the commands of our LORD.

- iii. Kindness brings its own reward: for it helps us to overcome our greatest foe, selfishness.

III. Consider the Example of INTERCESSION set by the B. V. Mary at Cana:

- i. Looking around and noticing the needs of others even in small things: so, if we are really earnest in the duty of Intercession, we shall not always wait to be asked to pray for others, but shall observe their wants, and without their knowledge pray for them.

- ii. In faith making known to GOD the needs of others: Intercessory prayer requires perhaps more faith than any other kind of prayer.

- iii. In love instructing others how to obtain their petitions, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it*."

Affections.—Examine yourself on these three duties of Obedience, Kindness, and Intercession; pray for more of the spirit of love, out of which they all flow; resolve on some definite act of kindness and subject of intercession.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPHIPHANY.

OUR LORD CLEANSING THE LEPER, I.*

"And Jesus put forth His Hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."—S. Matt., viii., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD touching with His loving Hands the leper.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may learn from JESUS your duties as a Priest.

Consider our LORD in this miracle as a Pattern to Priests.

I. In Preaching:

i. "*When Jesus had ended these sayings.*"—S. Matt., vii., 28. He had just preached the great Sermon on the Mount. He *finished* preaching. How many sermons we begin really to prepare, how few we finish. And is not this so with all our work? JESUS sets us an example here of *finishing* our work piece by piece.

ii. Immediate application of sermon to individual souls. How often, through sloth or cowardice, we neglect to follow up our preaching, until the impression produced has passed away, or perhaps by our social intercourse destroy the effect of our official teaching. After that hard day's work of public teaching JESUS began at once to deal with individual needs.

iii. He left the multitude for one soul. He was always leaving the ninety-nine for the one. We often think preaching to large numbers more important than pastoral work with individual souls. JESUS teaches us differently.

II. In dealing with Individuals:

i. "*If Thou wilt . . . I will.*" The man doubted not CHRIST'S power, but His Will. We must take care that our flock are assured of our *will* to help them, at all times, and at whatever trouble to ourselves.

ii. JESUS put forth His Hand and touched him: a lesson of humility. We must never show any signs of repugnance to those who come to us for help, however degraded they may be. Have we ever done so?

iii. Love of souls must be the passion of our life, and must be manifested by our actions; it will lead us among the spiritually leprous, not to contract their sin, but to draw them to health.

III. In ministering the Sacraments:

i. "*Be thou clean . . . go thy way, shew thyself to the Priest.*" Exercise of our LORD'S Divine power, and yet no abrogation of the ordinary means of grace. He is cleansed by anticipation, but he is to fulfil the law. So GOD alone can cleanse the soul from sin, and is not *tied* to means; yet we are not, on that account, to neglect the means of grace ordained in the Church. "GOD hath given power, and commandment, to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the ABSOLUTION and Remission of their sins." And, in dealing with sinners, we are to exercise this power of Absolution.

ii. "*See thou tell no man*" We are not only to minister the Sacraments, but to give counsel. Good advice here, as to spiritual reserve, and watchfulness against talking of self, by which many a blessing is lost.

iii. "*Offer the gift.*" We must not shrink, through false delicacy, from exhorting to the duty of almsgiving, as a thank-offering for the blessing received; and enjoining the performance of the duties imposed by the Church, "*that Moses commanded.*"

Affections.—Thanksgiving to our LORD, for not only calling you to the Priesthood, but teaching you, by His Example, how to minister your Office; examine yourself on these three heads of Ministerial work; pray for humility and love in all your dealings with souls; resolve to be more diligent in work.

*This Meditation is intended only for Priests.

THIRD MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

OUR LORD CLEANSING THE LEPER, II.

"And behold there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."—S. Matt. viii., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the leper worshipping our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may worship GOD in spirit and in truth.

Consider the Leper as a Pattern to sinners.

I. The Condition of the Leper :

i. "*He was FULL of leprosy.*"—S. Luke, v., 12. It was not one limb only, but the disease had spread over his whole body ; so sin sometimes grows, till it has attacked, and corrupted, every part of the nature.

ii. Leprosy sometimes caused "a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away." (Trench, p. 227.) So sin destroys, one after another, the faculties of our moral nature.

iii. Leprosy, as its ritual taught, was indeed a living death : so the sinner is like a corpse, hiding its ghastliness and corruption beneath its grave clothes.

II. The Action of the Leper :

i. He came to CHRIST : JESUS is amongst us now, and the world is still full of spiritual lepers ; He invites them to come unto Him, but how few *come to* CHRIST ; even when He comes to them, too often they reject Him.

ii. He worshipped CHRIST : I come as near to JESUS in the Holy Eucharist, I handle the Word of Life there, and receive Him into myself ; do I really worship at that time as earnestly as this poor leper ? and, if I do not get the blessing I seek, may it not be that I do not *worship* as I ought ?

iii. He cried, "*Thou CANST make me clean*" : he made an act of faith in our LORD's power. Is not this often the want in my prayers, and the cause of their being unanswered, that I do not pray with faith ; "O GOD, the Strength of all those who put their trust in Thee." (Collect for first Sunday after Trinity.) GOD is not the strength of those who do *not* put their trust in Him.

III. The Cure of the Leper :

i. I will : the one error in his prayer, arising from ignorance ; he believed in the power of GOD, but knew not the goodness of GOD, how should he ? but *we* cannot doubt or be ignorant of our LORD's Will to help us.

ii. Be thou clean : the word of healing, "*speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed.*"

iii. JESUS touched him : this action, with the words already considered, is at once the outward sign and means of the grace bestowed. In the Incarnation JESUS touched the world that He might heal it ; in the Sacraments He touches the individual soul, conveying to it life and health.

Affections.—Make acts of faith and worship ; pray that your worship may be more perfect ; realize your own need of cleansing, and resolve to seek our LORD's touch in the means of grace ordained by Him.

THIRD TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE CENTURION.

"When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."—S. Matt., viii., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Centurion, through the Jewish elders, pleading for his sick slave.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may imitate the virtues of this Centurion. Meditate on some of the virtues exhibited in the Centurion's actions.

I. Consider his Faith :

i. He believed that our LORD had, not only the power, but the will, to heal. In this he had advanced beyond the leper's faith.

ii. He believed our LORD's power to be unlimited—that He could heal by a word only.

iii. By the analogy of the obedience which he rendered and received, he showed he believed that our LORD was GOD.

II. Consider his Humility :

i. He speaks of himself as a man *under* authority. How anxious we are that others should know our importance. He was in a position of authority, but he speaks first of his subordination to others.

ii. He did not esteem himself worthy to come to CHRIST, but sent the elders of the Jews to intercede for his slave.—(S. Luke, vii., 3.)

iii. He did not esteem himself worthy for CHRIST to come under his roof, and spoke those words of sweet humility, which have been on the lips of so many millions of communicants ever since, "*Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.*"

III. Consider his Charity :

i. He showed his love to GOD, in a practical way, by building a synagogue. (S. Luke, vii., 5.)

ii. He showed his love to man, by his care even of a slave, "*who was dear unto him.*"—S. Luke, vii., 2.

iii. His love had won the affections of the Jewish elders, even though he was a Roman soldier, and their nation's foe.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, humility and love; pray for a greater measure of these Virtues; examine how you are growing in the exercise of them; resolve on some special act of one of these Virtues.

THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

"For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth : and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."—S. Matt., viii, 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the picture of martial discipline here described.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the Virtue of self-discipline.

Our LORD'S praise of the Centurion's faith raises him into a position of singular prominence, and leads us to inquire into the predisposing cause of this faith, that we may consider, whether the want of faith in the present day, may be accounted for by its absence.

I. He was a Roman soldier, and it was the power of martial discipline which had enabled the Romans to conquer the world ; the Centurion himself, in the text, points to this discipline, as that which led him to such perfect faith in CHRIST ; three other Centurions are mentioned in the Gospels and Acts, all of them with praise (S. Luke, xxiii., 47 ; Acts, x., 1 ; Acts, xxvii., 1 and 43) ; the virtue they had in common was discipline ; and, while the capacity for receiving Truth is at first the gift of GOD, it depends also to a great degree on moral training, *i. e.*, on self-discipline ; we are not as we were created by GOD, but by habit either hardened, like the wayside in the parable of the Sower, or prepared, like the good ground, to receive the Word of GOD : Self-discipline then is the predisposing cause of faith, and, in these days of luxury, and so-called liberty, its general absence accounts for the decay of faith.

II. "*I am a man under authority.*" He had learnt to obey, and even to be proud of his obedience ; we must say this, we are under GOD'S authority, we must obey His commands, and, just in proportion as we are proud of our obedience, and not ashamed to say I cannot do this, because my religion forbids it, so shall we grow in self-discipline, and therefore in faith.

III.* "*Having soldiers under me.*" He had learnt to command ; none can really learn this but by first learning obedience ;—what are your soldiers ? all the faculties of soul, body, and mind ; passions, good and evil, &c. ; what a rebellious army ! your work is to discipline them, so that you may be obeyed when you say, Go, Come, Do this ; but how ? there is but one way, you must recognize a superior authority, accept the commands of GOD in the Bible, the Church and your Conscience, as *absolute* ; when you have taken GOD for your GOD the thing is done.—(Ps. lxxiii., 1.)

IV. How perfectly this Centurion represents yourself. You are a Centurion in the army of CHRIST ; you began, as this man did, by taking the "*Sacramentum*," in your Baptism, you promised to be CHRIST'S faithful soldier ; you have the world to conquer, and heaven to win ; and "*this is the Victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ;*" and that faith depends on a life of Self-discipline.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, and obedience ; pray for an increase in these two virtues ; examine as to the state of the army of faculties, &c., under your control ; resolve to exercise the virtue of self-restraint.

*"Centurio est quilibet, qui suis membris, sensibus, viribus, et potentiis, quasi militibus præest."—C. à Lapide, Tom. viii., p. 194.

THIRD THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

JESUS AND MY SOUL.

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."—S. Matt., viii, 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, on His way to the Centurion's house, receiving this message.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may approach your Communion with true humility.

Consider your own soul as the slave for whom you are interceding.

I. The Condition of the soul:

i. Its slavery: the word used by S. Luke (vii., 2) shows that the sick man was a slave; how few of us are really free from slavery to Satan or Self.

ii. Its sickness: "*palsy, grievously tormented.*" How often, from the disuse or misuse of some of the faculties of our soul, do we become spiritually paralyzed; let us be thankful if we are grievously tormented by it; there is a worse paralysis, in which there is no pain, and so no hope.

iii. Its home: "*At home sick.*" Alas, too often the spiritually sick are at home in the world, and so their sickness continues; the soul when sick ought never to be at home, for in our true home there is no sickness.

II. The Prayer of the soul:

i. Confession of need. "*My servant lieth at home sick*": if we know our need, and can express it, let us be thankful.

ii. Confession of unworthiness. "*Lord, I am not worthy.*" we must feel not only our need, but our unworthiness, and so trust to the worthiness of the merits of CHRIST.

iii. Act of faith. "*Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed:*" we must believe that not our merits, but our necessities, are our claim on God's pity; "*all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive.*"—S. Matt., xxi., 22.

III. The Visit of the Healer in the Holy Eucharist: "*I will come and heal him.*"—S. Matt., viii., 7.

i. JESUS comes to speak the word of healing, and comfort to your soul.

ii. JESUS in the H. E. comes to impart to you His strength, the great need of all, but especially of paralyzed souls.

iii. You must come to the H. E. with a twofold sense of your needs and of your unworthiness. You must say "*Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof,*" nevertheless I pray Thee to come, for I dare not be left without Thee.

Affections—Realization of the misery of your sinfulness; make acts of self-abasement and faith; pray your LORD to speak to your soul the word of healing; resolve to make some especial preparation for your next Communion.

THIRD FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

DUTY OF MASTERS AND MISTRESSES.

"Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy."—S. Matt., viii, 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Centurion watching by his servant's sick-bed.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace faithfully to fulfil your duty toward your servants.

Meditate on the Centurion's example, as teaching the duty of employers towards their servants.

I. Consider the Centurion's care for his servant:

i. In temporal things: he ministers to his sickness. How often, when servants are sick, their employers only grumble at the inconvenience it is to them; how often a few words of sympathy would cheer up the gloom of a servant's life, a kind thought alleviate much suffering.

ii. In spiritual things: he seeks CHRIST'S healing for his servant. How often the souls of servants are indeed sick unto death, and the mistress of the house cares nothing for it.

iii. The responsibility of having servants: one of those things for which, as God's steward, you will have to give account, it is your duty to care both for the bodies and souls of your servants; that their life is, as far as you can make it, a happy one, and that they attend to their religious duties; that they have books of devotion, go to Church, and frequent the Sacraments.

II. Consider the Centurion's Example to his servant:

i. An example of order in his household: a disunited, disorderly family is a sad stumbling-block to the servants.

ii. An example of religion: it is little use telling our servants to be religious unless we set the example. The example of the mistress in religion is often the model for the household.

iii. There are few over whom God means us to have more influence than our servants. Remember we shall have to give account for the example we have set them, our missionary work, thus, often lies at home.

III. Consider the Centurion's Intercession for his servant:

i. He not only prayed himself, but got others to intercede for him: do we remember all our household in our prayers, thinking of the individual needs of each?

ii. This servant *"was dear unto him"*—S. Luke, vii., 2: if our servants are looked upon as God's children, entrusted to our care, they will be dear to us, and then, intercession for them will be not only a duty, but a joy.

iii. "Good masters make good servants" is a true proverb; if our servants see our care for them, they will generally be faithful, obedient and affectionate, and so the fulfilment of our duty to them brings its reward even here, and the neglect of that duty will most assuredly bring its punishment hereafter.

Affections.—An act of contrition for past neglect; examine in what you are most wanting as to this duty; pray that you may remember your responsibility.

THIRD SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

DUTY OF SERVANTS.

"Jesus saith unto them, *Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of the feast. And they bare it.*"—S. John, ii., 7-8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the servants obeying the orders of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be faithful in the state of life unto which GOD has called you.

The only instruction of the B. V. Mary was to these servants. How well they had learnt her lesson—and so teach the whole world the virtue of perfect obedience. She said to them, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it*"—and the text shows us how they did it. Consider:

I. The Readiness of their obedience:

- i. They obey at once: there was no procrastination.
- ii. They obey without questioning: there seemed no object in our LORD's command, but they did not stop to argue.
- iii. How often the merit of an act of obedience is spoiled either by not being done at the right time, or by stopping to enquire first the reason of the command.

II. The Thoroughness of their obedience:

- i. They obey exactly: they were told to *fill* the water-pots, and they filled them *up to the brim*.
- ii. They obey generously: it was not a trifle they were told to do—the water-pots held about 126 gallons—it was laborious work.
- iii. We must expect our obedience to cost us something, if it is to be worth anything; and we must take care that it is not marred by slovenliness, but that we do exactly what we are told, however toilsome it may be.

III. The Cheerfulness of their obedience:

- i. They obey willingly: our LORD was not their master.
- ii. They obey without grumbling: how often what is done is spoiled by a want of the spirit of obedience.
- iii. We must remember that the merit of all our actions depends on the motive, or spirit, in which they are done; and so, not only obey because it is a duty, but obey cheerfully because it is a joy to us to do our duty, "*as unto Christ.*"—Eph., vi., 5.

IV. The Blessings of obedience:

- i. Its Dignity: JESUS chose this state in life. "*The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*"—S. Matt., xx., 28.
- ii. Its merit: "*As to the Lord, and not to men.*"—Eph., vi., 7. The wages of faithful service are not all paid in this world, they are part of the reward of Heaven.
- iii. Its Safety: it is much safer to obey than to command, because there is far less responsibility.

Affections.—Thank our LORD for having, by His life, ennobled obedience; pray that you may fulfil this duty; resolve to repent of past unfaithfulness.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOMBS.

"And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way."—S. Matt., viii., 28

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the demoniacs dwelling among the dead, and, in their misery, crying and cutting themselves with stones.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace to come to CHRIST for healing.

We may not consider Possession identical with the worst forms of sin, but there is this in common, that both are the result of the yielding of the Will to the attacks of the devil.

I. Consider the condition of the demoniacs :

i. The struggle for mastery between the weakened will of the man, and the evil spirit that possessed him, the manifestation of a double personality, his own will impelling him to the feet of JESUS, the devils then crying out "*what have we to do with Thee?*" &c. So now with the sinner ; however weak, there are moments when he struggles to cast off the chain of evil habit, which binds him.

ii. They were a scourge alike to themselves, and to the community ; they cut themselves with stones ; and were so fierce that no man could pass that way.

iii. The misery of their dwelling-place ; surrounded by the ghastly corruption of the tombs.

II. Consider the world's treatment of them :

i. It bound them with fetters and chains : out of self-love trying to protect Society, but without any regard for their misery, or attempt to cure them ; so the world for its own sake restrains certain forms of moral evil which threaten Society, by laws, and prisons, but does very little toward either alleviating the misery of the fallen, or toward their restoration.

ii. When this failed they drove them out : Society will tolerate sin, so long as it does not obtrude itself too closely on the world's notice ; but when its restraints are broken through, it simply drives the victims of Satan out.

iii. They left them to a living death : so Society leaves its outcasts to their own misery ; to dwell together in districts, which are well represented by the tombs of Gadara, as peopled by the spiritually dead. Are there not such districts in all our large cities ?

III. Consider our LORD's treatment :

i. He draws from the poor captive of Satan, struggling at His feet, a confession of the name of the evil which has enslaved him. "*What is thy name?*" "*Legion.*"

ii. He heals him, and we find him (S. Mark, v., 15) sitting *clothed*, and in his *right* mind ; so we learn, that all sin is insanity ; *e. g.*, the Prodigal "*when he came to himself.*"—S. Luke, xv., 17.

iii. Absolution is the loosing of the soul from the chains of sin, and the clothing it with the robe of grace, the armour of light ; it is the putting on CHRIST.

Affections.—Resolve to bring all sin to the feet of JESUS, and to accept whatever His healing involves ; pray that you may never be satisfied with the world's method of restraining the results of sin ; thanksgiving for the lessons of this great miracle.

FOURTH MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE SACRIFICE OF CREATURES.*

"And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine : and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."—S. Matt., viii., 32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Gadarenes regretfully gazing on the destruction of their swine.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true detachment from creatures.

I. Consider some of the reasons why our LORD suffered the swine to perish :

i. Many have found great difficulty in this miracle, and called it "the miracle not of mercy" ; there is no more difficulty in 2,000 swine perishing, for the moral benefit of one man, than in the slaying of thousands every day for food for the race of man.

ii. He, Who is Creator and Possessor of all, said of the bread, which he had multiplied, "*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,*" to warn man against the sin of extravagance, or waste ; and here He allows 2,000 swine to perish, to warn man against the sin of covetousness, or excessive attachment to creatures.

iii. It was a miracle of the deepest mercy, for it was to teach man the lesson most needed, the true position of creatures in relation to man.

II. Consider the Law of the use of creatures :

i. They are to minister to man's *needs*, not to his luxuries.

ii. They are to be used as by a steward, who must one day give an account of his stewardship, and who is warned not to *waste* his Lord's goods.

iii. They are to lead man to glorify GOD for His love.

III. Consider the law of the surrender of creatures :

i. They are to be surrendered cheerfully at the call of GOD ; "*the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the LORD.*"—Job, i., 21.

ii. They are to be sacrificed for the benefit of others, especially for their moral benefit ; what sacrifice do you make for others? *e. g.*, in missionary work.

iii. They are to be sacrificed for GOD : He gives them to us, that we may have something to give to Him ; and the sacrifice of the creatures is often their truest use.

Affections.—Thanksgiving to GOD for the needs of life, which He has supplied ; realization of the responsibility of possessions ; resolve to examine how you minister GOD's goods ; pray for grace of detachment from creatures.

*By creatures we mean, in theology, everything except GOD and our own soul ; all we find in nature and Society, as well in the supernatural as natural order ; all gifts, states of life, &c.

FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE WORLD'S WELCOME TO CHRIST.

"They besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts."—S. Matt., viii., 34.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Gadarenes beseeching our LORD to depart.

PRELUDE II.—Watch and pray, lest you, by your actions, should follow their example.

I. Consider the world's welcome to CHRIST :

i. When He fed them with the loaves and fishes, they sought Him.—(S. John, vi., 26.)

ii. When He healed their sick, they rejoiced in Him. (S. Mark. i., 32–35.

iii. But when, in the cure of moral evil, a sacrifice had to be made, when His blessings were to cost them something, *then*, they besought Him to depart.

II. Consider the ordinary Christian's welcome to CHRIST :

i. He gladly receives the Bread of life, and all the blessings of Christianity.

ii. He believes thoroughly in our LORD's power to help in bodily sickness, and prays to be delivered from pain and suffering, and to be restored to health, that he may go on with his own plans in life.

iii. But when he discovers that the healing of the moral evil of his sin is to cost him some sacrifice, in the pain and shame of a true repentance ; in the sacrifice of pride, or pleasure, or even of actual possessions in the work of amendment and restitution, which is an essential part of penitence ; when he realizes that he must part with some of his swine ; *then*, he prays JESUS to depart.

III. Consider your own soul's welcome to CHRIST :

i. In the spiritual food He gives you, do you seek Him for Himself, or for some lower motive ? *e. g.*, because you fear to neglect the Sacraments, or because you wish to be at least as respectable as your neighbours in religion, and not to be a Communicant is to confess that there is something wrong.

ii. When in sickness you pray for health, is it that you may devote your life more earnestly to God's service, or merely for the pleasure of living ?

iii. Are you making the sacrifices necessary for the *cure* of sin in your soul ? giving up companions, avoiding all occasions of temptation, humbling yourself in acknowledgment of your sin ? if not, are you not, by your actions, praying our LORD to depart, and leave you to the enjoyment of your own way ?

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and love ; thank our LORD for coming to you, and welcome Him as the Healer of your soul ; offer Him all you have, and pray Him to take from you all that is dangerous to you.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

"Lord save us : we perish.....and there was a great calm."—S. Matt., viii., 25-26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the little boat tossing on the waves in the midnight storm.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace in all temptations and trials to trust in CHRIST, and to seek help from Him.

Consider the journey across the Sea of Galilee as a type of the soul's voyage across the seas of life

I. Consider the Storm :

i. The Boat our heart, after Communion, with JESUS in it ; the sea the path of life, often stormy with temptations and sorrows.

ii. The storm had been prepared for by the teaching in the ship, in the calm by the shore (S. Luke, v., 2-11) ; it was allowed, to test and increase faith, and to give an opportunity of practising what had been then learnt ; so now we are always, by GOD's providence, prepared for the storms of life, and even those winds of temptation which cause us such fear, also waft us more quickly to our home.

iii. The means of escape is recourse to ejaculatory prayer, awaking the LORD, in our heart, by our cries for His help.

II. Consider the Calm :

i. The blessings of a calm in our spiritual life : a time to recruit, but not to be idle ; to increase our faith and love.

ii. The responsibility of a calm : like all blessings, it has its responsibility, to put right what has been injured by the storm, and especially to learn some more lessons from our LORD's teaching, ready for the next storm.

iii. The dangers of a calm : the most dangerous of the three normal states of the soul's life, struggle, fatigue and calm ; danger of false security, of making it a holiday instead of a recreation, of neglecting to watch.

III. Consider how true this is to the history of the soul's experience :

i. The time of Conversion, when we wake to our danger, and realize the power of the storm that rages around us.

ii. The fleeing to JESUS in the Sacraments of the Church with the earnest cry, "*Lord, save us : we perish.*"

iii. The gift of peace in Absolution : when all is calmed by those words of authority, "*Peace, be still,*" and in our hearts and lives there is a great calm, which seems like a foretaste of heaven.

Affections.—Realize the storm that rages around, and make an act of faith in the presence and power of JESUS ; pray for faith and strength to endure ; resolve to make your next Communion with the prayer that you may have grace to resist some special temptation.

FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

JESUS OUR REFUGE.

"And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles awaking our LORD with their cry.

PRELUDE II—Pray that in all the dangers and fears of life, we may seek help in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Consider this scene as a type of our LORD's Presence in the Holy Eucharist.

I. Consider the trial of Faith:

i. As the simplicity of our LORD's appearance, as a Carpenter's Son from a despised village in Galilee, was a great trial to the faith of many at His first coming, so the simplicity of His appearance in the Eucharist, under the humble forms of bread and wine, is a great trial to the faith of many, now.

ii. As the fact of our LORD's sleeping amid the storm tried the Apostles' faith, and moved their fear, so now, the Sacramental sleep of JESUS in the H. E., accepting even injury and insult, and allowing the storm to threaten ruin to His Church, is often a sore trial to the faith of His followers, and, as their faith fails, their fears arise.

iii. Like all trials of faith it has its proportionate reward. *"Be it unto thee according to thy faith,"* is the very law of the Sacraments.

II. Consider the Harbour of Refuge:

i. The sleep of JESUS in the ship was at once the cause of the storm and the refuge in it; so now, it is the presence of our LORD in the H. E., that provokes the attack of the world, give up that, and the storm ceases; but the Presence of JESUS is also our refuge in the storm. *"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."*—Ps. xlvii. 5.

ii. It is the Home of Prayer: for in the H. E., as in the ship, the Great Intercessor is there; He Who says *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

iii. Let us take Refuge there in all our difficulties, and trials, imitating the silence of the LORD, while in the world not complaining or telling our wrongs to others; imitating the cry of the Apostles in pouring out our troubles to our LORD; coming to our Communion with the prayer, *"Lord, save us: we perish."*

III. Consider the Gift of Peace:

i. It is the special Gift of the H. E.: but it must be peace after war, calm after storm, it must be won by the work of preparation.

ii. It is not freedom from outward attack, but grace of endurance; it is like the peaceful sleep of JESUS in the storm, the peace of a heart that is conscious of no cause of fear in itself, and that has perfect faith in JESUS, and so dreads not the storm.

iii. The Peace of Heaven at the last will be but the awaking of JESUS from His long Sacramental sleep, to end the warfare with the peace of eternity.

Affections.—Faith in our LORD's power in the H. E.; resolve to let that be your refuge in the storms of life; realize the perfect safety of all who trust in Him; thank Him for His gift of Peace.

FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE SHIP OF THE HOLY CROSS.

"And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."—S. Mark, iv., 39.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, overcome with fatigue, sleeping in the stern of the ship, while the storm raged around.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to cling to the Cross, as the only place of safety amid the storms of life.

I. Consider this scene as a type of the Crucifixion :

i. The ship is the Cross, the Ark of the true Noah, JESUS CHRIST, on which He passed through the floods. His day's work done, He said, "*It is finished,*" and, having commended Himself into His Father's Hands, He bowed His Head, and slept the deep sleep of death, resting on the hard bed of the Cross, His only pillow the Crown of thorns.

ii. Around Him raged the storms of the world, raised by the agency of Satan ; the powers of darkness had done their worst ; for a time they seemed to have triumphed ; it was noon-day, indeed, but dark as midnight in that mysterious three hours ; the terrified Apostles trembled at the violence of that storm, and their faith seemed for a moment to fail in the face of the danger ; they forgot His teaching, back in the times of calm—*e. g.*, after the Transfiguration, when He told them that He must sleep this sleep of death.

iii. As He slumbered on the Cross, and the powers of evil seemed to have prevailed, the Apostles prayed, and He awoke from the sleep of death, arose from the bed of the grave, appeared to His terrified Apostles, and said, "*Peace be unto you,*" and there was a great calm, the calm of the Resurrection-life.

II. Consider this as it applies to ourselves :

i. The ship is our Cross : *That small piece of wood to which we commit our lives, and passing over the rough sea in this weak vessel are saved*—Wisdom, xiv., 5 ; on which, when our day's work is done, having commended ourselves to GOD, we must fall asleep and die, and like JESUS be taken down and laid in the grave.

ii. Around us while on the Cross, and especially while on our death-bed, rage the storms raised by Satan to try to shipwreck us ; at the moment of death JESUS says, "*Peace, be still,*" and there is a great calm.

iii. And the day will come when, in our ship, we shall have crossed the rough sea, and we shall arise to see our enemies put under our feet, and to enter on that everlasting calm of heaven which shall begin on that morning when we see JESUS standing on the shore to welcome us, when we hear Him say, "Children, 'come and dine,'" when we sit down at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. (S. John, xxi., 4-12.)

Affections.—Adore our LORD's example on the Cross ; pray for grace to follow it ; resolve to contemplate death on our Cross as the true escape from our enemies, and the entrance to the eternal peace and everlasting calm of heaven !

FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

"And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm."—S. Matt., viii., 24-27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the little boat tossing on the waves in the mid-night storm.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in all the dangers and difficulties of the Church you may have faith.

I. Consider this scene as a type of the Church:

i. The ship is the Church: the storm, the winds and waves of the world, raised by the malice of Satan.

ii. The type of this may be seen in Noah and his family in the Ark, the germ and foundation of the ancient Church of GOD, in a similar position to CHRIST and His Apostles, the germ and foundation of the Christian Church.

iii. The contrast is found in Jonah, slumbering in the cabin of his vessel. Jonah slept because his conscience was quiet from deadness, CHRIST slept because His was quiet from innocence. Jonah was the cause of the danger to the ship, CHRIST the security.

II. Consider the Storm:

i. The cause of the storm was diabolic hatred of CHRIST: the persecutions of the Church are, at the same time, a sign of Satan's attack, and of CHRIST's presence; they are the best sign that the Church is faithfully doing her work; history shows us that when the Church has neglected her duty, there has been no storm.

ii. The safeguard in the storm was the presence of CHRIST: so in the Church, He has said "*Lo, I am with you alway;*" "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The Blessed Sacrament in the Church is her security.

iii. The immediate effect of the storm was to raise the boat, as it floated safely over every billow; so the storms of persecution do but raise the Church further and further from earth, nearer and nearer to heaven; the Church is safest in times of storm, the great danger is when there is a calm, which is the result of a compromise with the world.

III. Consider the words of CHRIST:

i. He rebukes the Apostles' little faith: they were not faithless, or they would not have cried to Him for help; they were not faithful, or they would not have feared the storm.

ii. His rebuke of the elements shows the personality of Satan; His words would be meaningless or misleading if there were no person to whom He was speaking. Satan may always be recognized as directing the forces of the world against the Church.

iii. The Command of the Conqueror, the great "*Peace, be still,*" of the last day, what will it be? but the freeing all things from the tyranny of Satan forever.

Afflictions—Make an act of faith in the perfect safety of the Church, in spite of the attacks of the world; recognize that struggle is the normal condition of the Church militant; realize that persecution is a sign of her faithfulness, and a means of purifying, and raising the Church.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

"The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."—S. Matt., xiii, 24-25.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mixed grain growing together in the field.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for wisdom in understanding and dealing with the difficulties of the Church.

I. We may regard the Seven Parables in this chapter as prophetic of the seven ages of the Church of CHRIST—this one, touching upon the first and extending on, in its teaching, to the end, embracing all, and summing up, as 'in one continuous life, the history of the Church:

i. The first parable, that of the Sower, represents the Apostolic age: the sowing the seed of the Truth in various soils, and amidst many difficulties; *e. g.*, the ten persecutions. Like all these parables, it is not confined in its application to one age, but lives on contemporaneously with the others, for CHRIST, by His Ministers, is always sowing the Word of Truth

ii. This, the second parable, sets forth the age of the heresies, which arose almost as soon as the world became the field of the Church, when the work of the evil one began to show. As the first showed us the difficulties in sowing the good seed, so this calls our attention to the dangers arising after the seed is sown.

II. Consider the over-sowing of GOD's field with tares:

i. It was while men slept. Without pressing this too far, it seems to point to some negligence on the part of the Servants, or Ministers, of the Church. So every great outbreak of evil in the Church has been, not in time of tribulation, while men watched, but in time of prosperity, while they slept.

ii. The tares were a species of degenerate wheat, and so not observed at first. This answers the Calvinistic objection, by showing that wheat may degenerate into tares.

iii. The tares are not manifest until fruit appears. So our LORD has told us, "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*"—S. Matt., vii., 20.

III. Consider the treatment of the tares:

i. How many attempts, in the history of the Church, have been made by the Servants to do what was not their work, generally ending, as our LORD foretold, in rooting up the wheat. This does not forbid the exercise of Church discipline, only the use of violent means to extirpate error.

ii. They are to be allowed to grow together: not from indifference, but in the hope that they may become wheat; the negligence of the servants, at the time when the tares were sown, is not to be rectified by force, but by patient toil, in a spirit of penitence and love, to win them to the truth.

iii. They are to be burned, at the end. The Church can afford to wait, because in the end all will be put right.

Affections.—Make acts of faith and hope in our LORD's promises to the Church of ultimate triumph; pray for those who are in error; resolve to lament the sins of individual members of the Church, as the cause of error, and to speak and think charitably of those from whom you differ.

FIFTH MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE ENEMY.

"An enemy hath done this."—S. Matt., xiii., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD plainly revealing to His Church the Personality and work of the devil.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from the Evil One.

I. Consider the Personality of the devil:

i. The person of the enemy is in this parable opposed to the person of the householder, and (vv. 37 and 39) we are told that the enemy is the devil, and the Sower of the good seed the Son of Man; the two personalities are clearly set against one another.

ii. The manifestation of evil is at once recognized by our LORD as the work of His personal foe, and traced to him as its source.

iii. Nevertheless he is allowed to go on in his evil work till the harvest, till all is ripe.

II. Consider the work of the devil: he is always sowing tares among the wheat.

i. We may see it in the history of the Church: out of almost every great spiritual effort of the Church some evil has come.

ii. We may recognize it in the experiences of the soul; how many a work we have begun for the glory of God, and ended for our own glory; how frequently we are finding unworthy motives mixed with our very best actions.

iii. Very often the exact time when the tares were *sown* is indiscoverable.

III. Consider some of the ways in which the devil works:

i. He watches for the opportunity, and sows the seed of evil at his own time; generally while the good seed is being sown, so that it may pass unnoticed, till it has had time to take root.

ii. He can only sow while the servants sleep: remember that whether we speak of the Church or our own hearts, the devil cannot enter unless the door is opened from within; we must watch, because we know that he watches, and if we find he has entered while we slept at our post, we must blame ourselves.

iii. He is the origin of all evil, whether in the Church, or in the individual; but, as soon as he has sown the seed, he withdraws unobserved, and leaves the evil to grow, and when it manifests itself, it often seems to come from some other cause, which Satan has used as his instrument; he is always the first cause of all evil.

Affections.—Realize how often you have been warned to watch; examine how you perform this duty; pray for grace to be a faithful soldier in fighting against that enemy of which this parable teaches us; resolve to blame your own neglect, and not circumstances, for the evils of your life.

FIFTH TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

TARES AMONG THE WHEAT.

"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat."—S. Matt., xiii., 25.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the sleeping servants and the busy enemy.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligence in watching against the *first* attacks of evil.

Consider how in all things in this world we may see a mixture of evil with the good.

I. In the Church :

i. In her great type the Ark : the clean and unclean (Gen., vii., 8) represented the mixture of good and evil there should ever be in the Church on earth.

ii. The Tares are to try the wheat, to give it solid virtue, testing its value by temptation.

iii. The Wheat is to reclaim the tares, by example, &c.

II. In Family life : how often while parents, who ought to watch and guard their children, sleep, in a few hours more harm is done than many years can rectify :

i. By sowing the *seed* of evil habits which afterwards, unexpectedly, manifest themselves ; until the children of GOD indeed seem to become the children of the wicked one. (S. Matt., xiii., 38.)

ii. What can parents do ? It is your own fault, and so be patient and penitent ; work and pray, that you may reclaim them ; do not cast them out, lest in pulling up what seem to be tares, you root up what, with training, may again become wheat.

III. In our hearts, for they are GOD's field :

i. He sows how many desires of goodness, holy hopes and fervent resolves.

ii. But the devil is always sowing tares, even at the most sacred moments, even amongst the most self-denying acts of our life, tares of pride, &c., which to our dismay spring up with them, threatening to spoil all.

iii. We cannot root the tares up entirely here ; we have, in a spirit of penitential endurance, to struggle to bear and resist temptations, being thankful if, with all our efforts, we can keep the tares from spreading, and looking forward to that day when all will be tried by fire and the tares burnt. (I. Cor., iii., 13.)

Affections.—Make an act of contrition for your negligence in watching ; resignation to the endurance, as a penance, of those temptations which have been brought upon you by your own fault ; pray that you may endure and not yield to temptation ; resolve to watch more faithfully.

FIFTH WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE HARVEST.

"The harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels."—S. Matt., xiii., 39.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angel reapers in the great harvest-fields.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may then be among those children of the Kingdom, who are gathered as wheat into God's garner.

I. Consider how all things here in time tend toward the great harvest:

i. Every moment of time is to produce its fruit in eternity.

ii. Each thought, word, and action, is like a seed put into the ground, with the certainty that, unless its growth is stopped by some act of ours, it will produce its results in eternity.

iii. Therefore what care we should take as to what seed we sow now; no action stands by itself, each, in that day, will have ripened into some fruit.

II. Consider the Reapers:

i. They are different from the servants, the Ministers of the Church, ~~these~~ cared for the seed while growing, the angels are to gather in the ripened grain.

ii. With what intense interest they now watch the struggle between the wheat and tares.

iii. With what unerring and unsparing hand they then will make the final separation.

III. Consider the result of that harvest:

i. The tares bound in *bundles* and burnt; one of the torments of hell will be the companionship of the wicked, from which there will be no escape; bound together by the fetters of a common sin, this will be an additional element of the punishment of eternity.

ii. The wheat gathered into God's barn: every virtue ripened into its perfection, and safe from all further trial; "*then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.*"

iii. For which of these results are we preparing ourselves? remember that, in the moral as in the natural order, it is an unchanging law of God that "*whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"—Gal., vi., 7.

Affections.—Examine what seed you are sowing now; resolve to watch the signs of the harvest in your life; pray that you may be amongst the righteous in that great day.

FIFTH THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE FIELD OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens."—Ruth, ii., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Ruth patiently gleaning in the field of Boaz.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may persevere in seeking, in the field of the Church, that Corn of heaven, which can supply your every need.

The Book of Ruth is throughout, mystically, the history of the experiences of a devout soul in the Holy Eucharist.

I. Consider the type :

i. Boaz (*i. e.* the Strong man), represents our LORD, the Rich man to whom everything belongs.

ii. Ruth represents a devout soul who, leaving her own country, the world, renounces all to attach herself to CHRIST.

iii. The field in which she gleans so rich a harvest is the Church, where alone may be found the Body of JESUS, the Bread of life; good advice indeed is this, "*Go not to glean in another field.*"

II. Consider the gleaning:

i. The poverty of Naomi and Ruth in their own country until they heard "*that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread.*" —Ruth, i., 6. What poverty in the world until the soul hears of the Bread which the LORD gives to the people whom He visits.

ii. The journey from Moab to Bethlehem, for where should the LORD visit His people in giving them bread, but at Bethlehem, the House of bread? so that the soul must leave the world to seek this Heavenly Bread.

iii. She enters the field of Boaz, and He gives the Reapers charge concerning her. "*He shall give His Angels charge over thee*"—Ps. lxxxvi., 11—and instructs her in the mysteries of Communion.

(a.) "*When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink*"—ii., 9; this is the act of Spiritual Communion, which may be made at any time, as we need it.

(b.) "*At meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the Vinegar. . . . and He reached her parched Corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed.*" Meal-time, or Actual Communion; the parched Corn, that Body burnt in the fire of divine love; the Vinegar, or rough wine, the Precious Blood, the Food which only can suffice the soul.

(c.) "*She gleaned in the field until even*"—ii., 17. We must persevere in our Communion until life's sun sets, and the night comes, when no man can work.

III. Consider the Results of this Gleaning :

i. She gains abundant subsistence for herself: so in Communion the soul finds all its wants supplied.

ii. She obtains also food for Naomi; so the H. E. is a Propitiatory sacrifice for all for whom we offer it.

iii. She contracts a happy union with Boaz; so the H. E. is both the means and pledge of our eternal union with CHRIST.

Affections.—Gratitude for the great Gift; pray that you may be faithful, and persevering in using It; resolve to glean more industriously in the field of JESUS CHRIST.

FIFTH FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE.

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, . . . even as Christ forgave you."—Col., iii., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD praying for his persecutors, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*"

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of Christian forbearance.

I. Consider the duty of Forbearance, because :

i. It is taught by the example of our LORD, and the express injunction of S. Paul.

ii. We need, and expect that others should shew forbearance towards us; and the constant friction, which must necessarily occur in this life, is to develope in us a virtue, which will be part of our joy in the life to come.

iii. We cannot be happy here without the exercise of forbearance, for none are so miserable as those who are always resenting slights and wrongs; and we cannot hope to attain to happiness hereafter, if we leave so positive a duty unperformed.

II. Consider the duty of Forgiveness, because :

i. We are members one of another; the exquisite force of the Greek is lost in our translation here (*χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς*), *lit.*, forgiving *yourselves*; as the person you forgive is a member of the same Body as yourself, in forgiving him you are forgiving yourself.

ii. It is the condition of forgiveness, that we should forgive those who have trespassed against us; without the fulfilment of this condition, we cannot obtain forgiveness. (S. Matt., vi., 15.)

iii. CHRIST has forgiven you (S. Matt. xviii., 23-35); you need the forgiveness of others.

III. Consider how you perform these duties :

i. Not to *forgive* is to make yourself unhappy in this life, for malice is incompatible with happiness, and it is to forfeit the happiness of the life to come.

ii. Not to *forget* is to keep within you an occasion of sin, a sore feeling, which is ever ready to manifest itself in some uncharitable word or deed.

iii. Not to *forbear* is to disregard the golden rule, *do unto others as you would they should do unto you.*

Affections.—Adore the long-suffering, and mercy of GOD; pray to be delivered from malice; examine whether you are in charity with all men; pray for a forgiving spirit, and resolve to practice forbearance toward the person, who is most likely to irritate or annoy you

FIFTH SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

SPIRITUAL FEVER.

"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever."—
5. Matt., viii., 14.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing over the fever-stricken woman.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that His touch may heal all the diseases of your soul.

I. Consider the disease :

i. It is the contrast to the palsy which our LORD had cured just before : the spiritually palsied are those without any marked sin to struggle against ; the fevered are seldom free from struggle.

ii. It is the type of the temptations of passions, which seem to burn and throb in some souls.

iii. "*Laid*," so she was unable to rise : the weakness, and yet restlessness of the fever-patient well represents the *restless* life of the passionate man, yet without strength to restrain his passions.

II. Consider the healing : JESUS touched her.

i. His touch drives away the disease, calms the restless passions, as His voice had calmed the tossing sea.

ii. His touch imparts the needed strength.

iii. In the Sacraments He touches me ; do these results follow His touch ? if not, the fault is in me, for He is always the same.

III. Consider the result :

i. She arose : His life-giving touch imparts Resurrection-power to our dying bodies ; He touches us, that we may arise.

ii. She ministered unto them : A risen life must be spent in the service of CHRIST ; He does not heal our diseases that we may go back to the world again, but that, having strength imparted to us, we may follow and serve Him.

iii. His Personal touch has rested in blessing on me ; do I show my thankfulness, not only with my lips, but in my life, by giving up myself to His service ?

Affections.—Realization of the misery of sin ; pray for mercy and healing ; resolve to seek the touch of JESUS in the Sacraments ; examine your life as to the return you are making for CHRIST's blessings.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. . . . And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."—S. Matt., xxiv., 27-30

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate this glorious Coming of our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be found ready.

I. Consider the suddenness of this Coming—as the lightning :

i. No feature of our LORD'S Advent is more frequently dwelt upon in the Bible than its unexpectedness : like the flashing of lightning, there will be no warning.

ii. It will be to all at once ; there will be no time for the news to travel ; *as the lightning comes from the east, and shines even unto the west.*

iii. It will light up the darkness, manifesting all that had been concealed : like a flash of lightning, revealing, with inconceivable vividness, all that the darkness of this world now hides.

II. Consider the sign of this Coming : the Sign of the Son of Man, the Cross :

i. It will be the symbol of His redeeming love ; the exhibition of all He did for you.

ii. It will be the test of your life ; the standard by which it will be measured ; all you did for Him.

iii. Some shall mourn when they recognize the Cross they refused to carry themselves ; the Cross on which, by their sins, they nailed their Saviour. Some shall hail it with joy, as the law they followed in time, and the reward they shall enjoy in eternity.

III. Consider the manner of this Coming :

i. *"In clouds."* Those clouds I see floating across the sky so often are God's Voice speaking to me of this great Day.

ii. *"With power."* How much power I have now, power to choose, power to rebel ; but then, how will my puny strength contrast with the manifestation of His Omnipotence !

iii. *"With great glory."* How tawdry will then appear the gilt of this world, which so often passed for pure gold ; how much of what I thought glory will then prove my deepest shame.

Affections.—Adore the greatness of the Power, and Glory, and Goodness of God ; realize the suddenness of His Coming ; resolve to let the lightning, and the clouds, remind you of this ; pray for watchfulness.

SIXTH MONDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree : so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."—S. Matt., xiii., 31-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the world, in the time of Constantine, flocking into the Church.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may learn from the vicissitudes of the Church, a lesson of trust.

The parables of the Sower and of the Tares, exhibiting the two classes of hindrances to Church growth, might well have discouraged us ; this, and the parable of the leaven, are brighter, as conveying the assurance that, in spite of all difficulties, both from within and from without, the Church should indeed grow, and triumph over all obstacles.

I. Consider the smallness of the Church's beginning :

i. In the little boat in the storm on the lake of Galilee.

ii. At Pentecost, the 120 assembled.

iii. And this repeated in each new Country in which the Church is founded.

II. Consider the power of the Church's Growth :

i. Triumphing over obstacles from within, the bad soil of an utterly corrupt nature.

ii. Overcoming the tares of heresy, which threatened at one time to ruin all.

iii. As the mustard-seed gives out its fiery virtues by being bruised, so the Church developed by the great persecutions.

III. Consider the Triumph of the Church :

i. It becomes a tree, and attains to full growth.

ii. The birds of the air lodge in its branches,—as, in the time of Constantine, the world crowded into the Church to lodge there.

iii. They rob it of its fruit, for that is what attracts them ; they disfigure it with their nests, and sometimes it seems to bend under their weight, but, at the last, they will all be shaken out.

Affections.—Adore God's love and goodness to His Church ; make acts of faith, hope, and love ; pray for the peace and unity of the Church.

SIXTH TUESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE GROWTH OF CHRIST IN THE SOUL.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree : so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."—S. Matt., xiii., 31-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the seed of spiritual life implanted in an infant at Baptism.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that CHRIST may grow in your soul.

Consider this parable in its individual application. In the two previous parables in this chapter, we have had seeds, now it is the history of *one* seed, the seed of CHRIST planted in our nature, and assimilating that nature to Himself, so that we see here the growth of CHRIST in the soul.

I. The smallness of the Beginning :

i. The seed is the whole life of the tree compressed within the small dimensions of a grain ; so the germ of spiritual life, planted in our nature at Baptism, contains the whole force of grace, which is to be developed, by assimilating our nature to itself, into the fulness of the stature of CHRIST ; as the seed grows into the tree by the assimilation of certain properties from the soil and air.

ii. The soil, however good, can do nothing without the seed ; matter nothing without force ; so, however good the natural temperament may be, it can do nothing without grace, while the converse is also true, that grace can do nothing without the coöperation of nature.

iii. The great results of our life come from small beginnings, and a spiritual life is made up of attention to small things, from which great results follow.

II. The Power of Growth :

i. In spite of the badness of the ground of our own nature, and the malice of our enemy, the seed does grow, and CHRIST is formed in the soul.

ii. As the mustard has to be bruised, in order that it may give out its powers, so grace needs to be developed by temptation and trial, that virtues may be formed.

iii. This growth is gradual, and according to certain laws. (This point will prove the subject of the next Meditation.)

III. The greatness of the Result :

i. The seed has developed into a tree, and that tree is the counterpart of the tree which bore the seed ; so that the end of a Christian life is the Imitation of CHRIST.

ii. This tree produces, as its fruit, other seeds ; so a Christian life leads others to Christian life, and when a Saint dies he leaves an example, which many may follow.

iii. The birds of the air lodge in its branches. Something of wordliness, which tries to nestle even in a Christian life, disfiguring it, as the nests do, but to be shaken out of it at the last after death.

Affections.—Realization of the dignity of being a member of CHRIST ; examine how CHRIST has grown in your soul ; pray that you may coöperate more with Him, in using the grace given you ; resolve to welcome trials, as the means of developing virtues.

SIXTH WEDNESDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—S. Mark, iv., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a tree, passing through the various stages of its growth, and the changes of the seasons.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may grow in spiritual life according to spiritual laws, that your fruit may be good fruit.

I. The seed has to pass through all the stages in its growth; we cannot, as some think, skip a few stages, and pass from the seed to the fruit without intermediate growth; hot-house plants have little strength, and our spiritual life must not be hot-house growth. Consider:

i. The seed begins by taking from the ground what it needs for its growth, assimilates this to itself, and rejects the rest; so grace in the soul takes up and uses what it needs of our lower nature, and that is taken into the Body of CHRIST, the rest is rejected.

ii. The seed does not use the air till it has grown, and put forth its leaves; it is through these that it breathes, and takes in various gases and properties of the air; so there must be a certain amount of growth before the soul can really pray.

iii. It needs also moisture, the rain from heaven: so the soul requires the waters of grace through the use of the Sacraments.

II. The seed has not only to pass through stages in its growth, but through various seasons; so with the growth of the spiritual life:

i. Spring-time, with its soft, gentle breezes, telling of the joyous brightness of first conversion, when the seed makes its first effort to manifest its power of life.

ii. Summer: with its scorching heat; the temptations which rapidly call out the latent powers of grace, and begin to develope the fruit.

iii. Autumn: the falling-off of the leaves, and apparent dying away of much of the outward part of the tree, revealing the fruit, which the leaves had concealed, and throwing all the forces of the tree into the perfection of that fruit; as the soul advances, its piety becomes more practical, though perhaps less showy.

iv. Winter: the period of coldness, when the life seems frozen, and, from without, the tree looks dead, but "*He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.*"—S. Matt., xxiv., 13. And Winter is the time when the forces of the tree are being stored up ready for a fresh effort, and a new growth in the next Spring.

III. The time of Fruit:

i. The tree covered with blossom looks best, but those blossoms have to die off, that it may bring fruit; so many an impulse and desire has to meet with disappointment, as the true Husbandman of the soul "*purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*"—S. John, xv., 2.

ii. Each branch is covered with fruit, and yet it is all the fruit of the original seed, not of the branch. Cut off the branch, and the fruit withers; so all that is good in us, all holiness is CHRIST's, separate from Him is only death.

Affections.—Realize the need of endurance of temptation, and coldness, that we may attain to mature fruit in spiritual life; pray for patience, that you may persevere in all spiritual exercises, in times of coldness.

SIXTH THURSDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE BODY AND THE EAGLES.

"For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—S. Matt., xxiv., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John, in his meditation, gazing upon CHRIST, and then writing the Gospel of His Divinity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for eagles' sight.

The special characteristic of the eagle is the keenness and strength of its sight, which enables it to gaze straight at the sun.

I. Consider this characteristic as manifested by the Saint, whose emblem is the eagle, S. John :

- i. His attraction to the Body of JESUS at the Cross, the only man there.
- ii. His apprehension of the GODHEAD of JESUS, in his Gospel.
- iii. His sight of the Vision of JESUS in His glory, in the Revelation.

II. Consider that to the eagle-soul the Body of JESUS in the Holy Eucharist is all this, for :

i. It is in the H. E. that the Passion is especially exhibited: "*For as often as ye eat THIS BREAD, and drink THIS CUP, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.*"—I. Cor., xi., 26.

ii. It is in the H. E. that the Eye of faith recognizes the Presence of its God.

iii. It is in the H. E. that the Vision of Heaven is revealed to the faithful soul.

III. Consider some necessary consequences of this :

i. The text *positively* asserts, without limitation, that *wheresoever the Body is the eagles will be gathered together*, therefore the H. E. is the test of the eagles in a parish ; if we have eagle-sight to discern the Body of JESUS in the H. E., we shall act on this text, and be attracted to the H. E.

ii. This gift of eagle-sight is the result of purity. "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*"—S. Matt., v., 8.

iii. This purity is the result of penitence: we must cleanse the eye of the soul, that we may see God ; the moral hindrance to faith is sin ; "*ye repented not afterwards, that ye might believe.*"—S. Matt., xxi., 32.

Affections.—Gratitude for the Gift of the Body of JESUS ; pray that you may have more spiritual discernment ; resolve to be more frequent in your attendance at the H. E.

SIXTH FRIDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE LAW OF THE CHURCH'S WORK.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"—S. Matt., xiii., 33.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the growth of the Church, as leaven working in meal.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the leaven of grace may work in you till you are sanctified.

In this parable the imagery is entirely changed, though still retaining connecting links with the three parables which precede it.

I. Consider the principle of the Church's Jurisdiction:

i. Instead of the Man, we have the Woman; the Sower has sowed His seed, and gone; and all is under the care of the Woman His Bride; and yet She does not supplant Him, for She is making the cakes against that day when He shall come again, all her work is for Him.

ii. Instead of the great field of the world, we find the House of the Church is built, and all the work of this parable is restrained within the limits of the House.

iii. Instead of the growing corn we have the meal, the corn has been reaped, and ground, and brought into the house; it is limited, too, to three measures, the number of the Elect gathered out of the world (S. John, xvii., 9); the Church has only Jurisdiction over the baptized, She can open the Door to those that knock, but she cannot draw them from the world; for "*no man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him.*"—S. John, vi., 44.

II. Consider the principle of the Church's work:

i. The principle which works is no longer, as in the preceding parables, a seed having life within itself, but a substance which owes all its power to death, for leaven is a small piece of dough, which has been taken out of the lump, and exposed to the action of the air (to the rays of the sun and influence of the breeze), until it has become sour, and this is primarily the type of CHRIST Himself, Who was taken from the substance of Humanity, from the substance of the B. V. Mary, exposed to the scorching sun of temptation, and to the rough blasts of persecution, until He passed under the power of death, and this principle is by the Church put to work in each soul in Baptism, in each nation at its conversion.

ii. Leaven communicates its properties to those particles which are in contact with it, and converts them into leaven, and they in turn do the same, till all is leavened; so by Baptism we become members of CHRIST, part of His Body, the leaven works till we become CHRISTLIKE in our whole nature, the three measures representing our body, soul and spirit. (I. Thess., v., 23.)

iii. The hiddenness of this work: the seed springs up out of the earth, the earth only nourished it, but the leaven acts upon that in which it is placed, secretly, not rising out of the meal, but raising it.

III. Consider some illustrations of this in Church history:

i. In the time of Constantine, when the Church was, as it were, swallowed up by the world, which nominally rushed into its fold; in time all was leavened.

ii. In the Teutonic invasions when the Church was again swallowed, this time by a barbarian world; the result was the same.

iii. In each new country, in each fresh soul, which the Church has converted, the same law has been worked out.

Affections.—Realize the need of sanctification of every part of your nature, and pray that you may indeed be wholly sanctified: resolve to bring every part of your life under the influence of grace.

SIXTH SATURDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."—S. Matt., xiii., 33.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a child casting a stone into some smooth, still lake, and watching the ripples produced widening out in circles, and communicating their motion to the surface of the whole lake, until their wavelets break upon the shore.

PRELUDE II—Pray that the examples which you cast upon the world's waters may be always good.

I. Consider the action of leaven :

- i. It communicates its nature to all that it comes in contact with, and converts all into leaven.
- ii. This process is only limited by the amount of meal ; it must go on till all is exhausted.
- iii. It is the working of the principle of death, for leaven owes its force to death.

II. Consider the result of bad example :

- i. It is the greatest force for evil in the world ; hence our LORD'S words, "*Woe unto the world because of OFFENCES*" (*lit.*, stumbling-blocks, *σκανδαλῶν*) —S. Matt., xviii., 7 ; it not only ruins what it touches, but converts that into a new centre of evil, so that its power goes on increasing, as in geometrical progression.
- ii. Its only limit is the Day of Judgment ; it will go on working till then.
- iii. It is the working of the principle of eternal death—laying its hand on soul after soul.

III. Consider the result of good example :

- i. It is the greatest power for the spread of CHRIST'S Kingdom ; it is the very law of its growth.
- ii. It is limited only by the Day of Judgment ; think of the result then of the example of each Saint.
- iii. It is the carrying out of the great principle of death to the world and sin ; of conquering death by dying.

Affections.—Realize that your examples will go on working, like that stone cast into the lake, till they reach the shores of time ; examine what your examples have been in the past, and say Ps. cxxx. as an act of contrition for all the evil you have done by bad example ; pray for grace, and resolve to set a good example in some one definite duty.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE CHURCH'S CALL TO WORK.

"Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you."—S. Matt., xx, 4

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Church's appearance to-day, the festive ornaments removed, the violet, the Church's working-dress, telling of work to be done.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so faithfully labour in the vineyard of your soul this Lent that you may obtain the offered reward.

The Church's work-time has begun; to-day all tells of work, and work with reference to that glad morning which is the end of Lent, and the type of that eternal Easter which will end earth's penitence in the joys of heaven.

I. Consider the teaching of the Church to-day:

i. The first lesson* this morning (Gen., i.; ii., 4.) shows us GOD working in Creation.

ii. The first lesson* this evening (Gen., ii., 4; iii.) shows us man placed in Eden "*to dress it and keep it.*"

iii. The Epistle tells us of a race to be run, a battle to be fought, a body to be kept in subjection.

iv. The Gospel continues the lesson and shows that we are called to work, and to work in CHRIST's vineyard.

II. Consider the teaching of all the Gospels for the season before Lent:

i. Septuagesima: Work in the Vineyard of CHRIST.

ii. Sexagesima: The preparation of ground for the reception of CHRIST.

iii. Quinquagesima: The opening the eyes of the blind, that, like Bartimeus, we may follow CHRIST through His Passion, looking to the glory beyond.

III. Consider that the reward in all is JESUS CHRIST, here in your Easter Communion, hereafter in the Beatific Vision:

i. The penny, stamped with the image of the King, the type of the Sacramental gift of JESUS CHRIST.

ii. The seed which is the Word of GOD, GOD the Word, JESUS CHRIST.

iii. Spiritual sight to enable you to see and follow JESUS CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize the work there is to be done in the Church, and in your own soul; pray for grace, and resolve to make this Lent a real time of work; resolve to fight against one definite sin, and to cultivate one special virtue.

*English Lectionary.

MONDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

GOD'S QUESTION TO MAN.

"*Why stand ye here all the day idle?*"—S. Matt., xx., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a market-place.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so work, while it is called to-day, that you may not in the Great Day be charged with idleness.

I. Consider the market-place of the world:

i. The market-place is the very busiest spot in the world, where every one seems intent on work; our LORD looks on, and asks the question, "*Why stand ye here all the day IDLE?*"

ii. How much self-denial is exercised in the work of the world; and yet, "*it is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness.*"—Ps. cxxvii., 3.

iii. The one business of life is to glorify God, and, if this be neglected, all else is but idleness. S. Peter's confession, "*Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing*" (S. Luke, v., 5), will be the bitter experience of those who have given all their energies to work in the world's market-place, instead of CHRIST'S Vineyard.

II. Consider the excuse made:

i. In our LORD'S time many could make the excuse, "*because no man hath hired us*"; but can we?

ii. If it be indeed true that we have not yet been called, not yet heard the Voice speaking in our souls, we shall not be blamed for what was not our fault; but we can make the excuse no longer.

iii. Is it not more often the attractions of the riches, honours, and pleasures, of the world which have kept us, as slaves, in its market-place, idling away the day of grace?

III. Consider the command:

i. "*Go ye also into the vineyard.*" Without spending more time in excuses, go to work at once; no more time must be lost.

ii. The reward will be, not according to the length of time, but according to the zeal and fidelity of our work for CHRIST.

iii. The reward will be for those who persevere *to the end*; it is not enough to have entered the vineyard early, and to have spent many hours in the work, if the labour is abandoned before the evening. "*He that shall endure unto THE END, the same shall be saved.*" "*Be thou faithful UNTO DEATH.*"

Affections.—Examine how much of your day has been lost in idleness; make an act of contrition for all of your life that has been wasted in the past; resolve to begin work at once, and pray for the grace of final perseverance.

TUESDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

GOD'S CALLS.

"Go ye also into the vineyard."—S. Matt., xx., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Householder observing the groups of labourers in the market-place, and choosing from them, at the various hours, those whom He sent into His Vineyard.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may hear, and obey, all God's calls to your soul.

GOD's calls are personal calls. The Householder went out Himself to hire the labourers, though He left it to His steward to give them their daily wages. Consider that you are called as individuals, each at your own hour.

I. Early in the morning, at the rising of the sun:

i. Through the Incarnation: GOD as a little Child, calling and teaching, by word and example, that except ye have *"become as little CHILDREN ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*—S. Matt., xviii., 3.

ii. The call in the morning of life, in childhood; in Baptism, the first great extension and application of the Incarnation to your soul.

II. The third hour, while it is still morning:

i. The hour of the descent of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost.

ii. The call of the HOLY GHOST through the Sacraments; in your Confirmation, through your first Communion.

III. The sixth and ninth hours, during the heat of the day:

i. The hours of the Passion, the Call from the Cross.

ii. The call of JESUS to those in the noonday of life, in the heat of temptation.

IV. The eleventh hour, as the sun is fast sinking:

i. The call from the Throne of Heaven, *"Behold, I come quickly. . . . to give every man according as his work shall be."*—Rev., xxii., 12.

ii. The last call to those who are growing old in years, or sin, to those whose sun is fast setting, to work, while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work.

Affections.—Examination of your own position as to GOD's calls, whether you have obeyed them; resolve to listen for GOD's voice, and to pray Him to speak to you.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

GOD'S VINEYARD.

"My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes."—Isaiah, v., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Householder carefully supplying the labourers with all that was needed for the cultivation of His vineyard.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use faithfully all means of grace that God has put within your reach.

I. Consider this Vineyard as the Jewish Church, called, in the early morning, with whom was made the covenant of *works*, the first labourers the Householder *agreed with* for a penny a day. (S. Matt., xx., 2.)

- i. The Fence: the law which was given from Sinai.
- ii. The Choicest Vine: the knowledge of the true God.
- iii. The Tower: the Temple. "*The place that I have chosen to set My Name there.*"—Neh., i., 9.
- iv. The Wine-Press: the altars of the Temple, where the sacrifices, which told of Redemption, were offered daily.
- v. The Grapes: the Patriarchs and Saints of the Old Covenant—*e. g.*, Heb., xi.

II. Consider this Vineyard as the Christian Church, called at the third hour, when the HOLY GHOST came down, with Whom was made the covenant of *grace*. "*Whatsoever is right I will GIVE you.*"—S. Matt., xx., 4.

- i. The Fence: the angels.
- ii. The Choicest Vine: CHRIST Himself.
- iii. The Tower: the Bible, by which we are warned against all dangers which threaten, in which we may take refuge in all assaults of the enemy.
- iv. The Wine-Press: the altars of the Holy Eucharist, where flows the Wine of heaven.
- v. The Grapes: the Saints of God.

III. Consider this Vineyard as your soul, redeemed on the Cross between the sixth and ninth hours, called—at what hour?

- i. The Fence: the walls of grace, the armour of light, the robe of Baptism.
- ii. The Choicest Vine: CHRIST's own nature, implanted in you at Baptism.
- iii. The Tower: your conscience, enlightened by the HOLY GHOST.
- iv. The Wine-Press: your cross.
- v. The Grapes: your virtues, and good works.

Affections.—Gratitude for all that GOD has done for you, both in the Church, and in your own soul; pray that with such helps you may labour faithfully, and obtain the promised reward.

THURSDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

THE REWARD.

"They received every man a penny."—S. Mat., xx., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Steward dispensing to each labourer the reward, according to his Lord's directions.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may receive thankfully, and use wisely, the gifts of GOD.

I. Consider the reward of the Jewish Church, the penny:

i. The Jewish Covenant was of works, the first labourers were hired for definite wages.

ii. All the promises of that covenant were fulfilled.

iii. The spirit of Judaism made the divine gift worthless; apart from GOD the penny is valueless.

II. Consider the Gifts of GOD to the Christian Church, the Sacraments:

i. Like the penny, they bear the Imprint of the King.

ii. They are given alike to all who come, without regard to their merit.

iii. They are to each what each makes them; their value depends on their use.

III. Consider the reward of heaven, to both Jew and Gentile:

i. The sight and possession of JESUS; the Beatific Vision; the same to all who have worked in the Vineyard to the end.

ii. The value depending on the capacity of each individual to enjoy the Gift.

iii. That capacity depending on the work done in the vineyard during the day of this life.

Affections.—Gratitude for Sacramental gifts and graces; examination as to how they have been used; pray for wisdom, and diligence, to use more faithfully the means of grace.

FRIDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

THE SPIRIT OF DISCONTENT.

"They murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day."—S. Matt., xx., 11-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the dismissal of the discontented labourers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of Charity.

I. Consider the instances of this spirit of discontent in the Gospels:

i. It was the spirit of Judaism; the spirit which eventually caused their rejection of Christianity, because they could not share the gifts of CHRIST with the Gentiles. We see this illustrated especially in the life of S. Paul.

ii. It was the spirit of Pharisaism; the self-righteousness which over-estimated its own work, and claimed an especial reward.

iii. It was the spirit of the elder brother, in the parable of the Prodigal Son; which underrated the work of others, and could not recognize their right to any gift.

II. Consider how this spirit may be found now:

i. In the over-appreciation of ourselves, and of our dues.

ii. In the depreciation of our neighbours, and a disbelief in the sincerity of their repentance.

iii. Even when we do not envy the blessings of others, in the murmuring spirit with which we ourselves receive both God's blessings, thinking we deserve more, and God's chastisements, feeling that our lot is harder than we merit.

III. The result of the spirit of discontent:

i. "*Take that thine is:*" and what is *ours*? nothing, but what we receive from God, and if we attempt to carry that away, it loses its value, and, apart from God, it turns to nothingness.

ii. "*Go thy way:*" no longer God's way; the way of God is the patient and loving bearing of the Cross; the way of discontent is a cross in itself, but not CHRIST'S Cross.

iii. Murmuring can never result in obtaining more; it always leads to losing the value of what we have.

Affections.—Gratitude for God's gifts; realization of your own unworthiness; pray for a spirit of charity; resolve to watch against any spirit of discontent in your life.

SATURDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA.

THE RACE OF LIFE.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."—I. Cor., ix., 24-25.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the race-course of this world; the multitudes who throng it, all claiming to compete; the crowds of spectators, who once contended and know the difficulties of the race; two prizes to be run for, one temporal, the other eternal; one corruptible, the other incorruptible.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so run that you may obtain the prize.

I. Consider the race for the prize, which the world offers, of a corruptible crown of honours, or riches, &c.

i. The intense earnestness of the runners, straining every faculty, regarding all else as entirely secondary, and persevering till the end, in spite of all difficulties, with almost heroic courage and endurance.

ii. The supreme self-denial of the competitors, "*temperate in all things*," willingly surrendering anything, however pleasant, which may be a hindrance to success; toiling on in spite of weariness or disappointment.

iii. And yet for a corruptible crown; the garland of pine leaves, which faded in a day, a fit emblem of all earth's prizes.

II. Consider the Christian Athlete, struggling, in the race-course of life, for the incorruptible crown, which God offers, the prize of eternal life:

i. Sauntering along the course; stopping to attend to anything that presents itself before attending to the race; resting whenever tired, and often giving up running for a time.

ii. Thinking all training irksome and unnecessary; incapacitating himself for any serious effort by continual self-indulgence.

iii. And yet the crown, the greatest prize, eternal life, and one which if lost, all is lost.

III. Consider S. Paul's advice:

i. So to run that you may obtain; to make the race the one business of your life. "*This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*"—Phil., iii., 13-14.

ii. To follow carefully the rules of the race. "*If a man also strive for mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*"—II. Tim., ii., 5. The precepts of the Gospel, the rules of the Church, and first, daily self-denial.—S. Matt., xvi., 24.)

iii. To practice mortification and self-discipline. "*I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.*"—I. Cor., ix., 27.

Affections.—Fear lest after all you should lose the prize; diligence in the service of God; pray for grace to persevere, and resolve to do some act of mortification or self-denial.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE SOWER.

"*A sower went out to sow his seed.*"—S. Luke, viii., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Sower going forth to his work.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a blessing on all sowings of the Word of God, especially in your own soul.

Consider some of the missions of *the* Sower, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to sow His seed.

I. In Humanity at the Incarnation :

i. Sent by the Father: "*When the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*"—Gal., iv., 4-5.

ii. The Seed sown is His own nature: Body, Soul, and Divinity.

iii. That sowing is still going on, by the operation of the HOLY GHOST, in each child at Baptism.

II. In the World by His Life and Ministry :

i. Still sent by the Father: "*For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son. . . . For GOD SENT not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved*"—S. John, iii., 16-17.

ii. The seed sown was His Words, His Life, His Example.

iii. This sowing still continues; His words live on, His life is the model of every true life, His example is the leaven which is to leaven the world.

III. In the Church by His Apostles and their successors :

i. Christ sends them forth to sow, and yet accompanies them: "*Lo, I am with you always.*"—S. Matt., xxviii., 20. In the great sending forth of the Apostles (S. John, xx., 21): "*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*" The word for "hath sent" is ἀπέστειλε, but for "send I" is πέμπω. Although both verbs are used by S. John of the mission of CHRIST from the Father, yet, when they occur together in a sentence like this, where the emphasis, by the alteration of the word, seems thrown on the latter verb, it behoves us to enquire most carefully as to the distinction of meaning in the synonyms. Now ἀποστέλλειν implies that the sender remains behind; πέμπειν, either that the person is sent under an escort, or conducted by the sender; hence it is about equivalent to the Latin "*deducere*". Thus, in the discrimination of these two verbs, we have beautifully brought out, in this sentence, the doctrine that in sending forth His Representatives, JESUS goes with them.

ii. The Seed sown is still Himself in the Sacraments of the Church.

iii. The continuity of CHRIST's work in the Church is brought out by the word used for "the sower" (ὁ Σπείρων). The present participle signifies that the act is in process, and, taken in connection with the careful distinction of words in the Apostolic Commission (III., i., *supra*), implies that CHRIST is *ever* sowing, because He goes forth with His Representatives in their work; thus showing that Apostolic succession is a doctrine which is necessary, not merely to the claims of Church authority, but as the *means* by which the continuity of our LORD's work as *the* Sower is preserved.

Affections.—Gratitude to our LORD for His work for man in His threefold mission: pray that you may recognize the living power of his work; resolve to cultivate the seed sown in your own heart.

MONDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

THE WAYSIDE.

"As he sowed, some fell by the wayside."—S. Luke, viii., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Sower at his work, as he approaches the foot-path across the field, dropping, of necessity, some of his seed on its hard surface.

PRELUDE II —Pray "from hardness of heart and contempt of Thy Word and Commandment, good LORD, deliver me."

We may see in the different sorts of ground, on which the seed fell, different conditions of the soul; take first that by the wayside.

I. Consider the condition of the wayside: This is not, as some suppose, the roadside, but *by the path* through the field (*παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν*.)

i. A path which had been ploughed up once, but which had gradually been trodden down again; first one person making perhaps a short cut through the field, and leaving footprints in the soft earth, as an encouragement for others to follow; at length the ground becomes quite hard, by frequent passage over it, so that the rain runs off without penetrating it.

ii. The Sower, as he scatters his seed, lets some fall on this path, and there it remains, unable, from the hardness of the ground, to germinate, until the birds carry it off.

iii. The dropping of the seed only renders the path harder, for it attracts the birds, who, when they come to pick it up, trample the ground with their claws, and make it, if possible, worse.

II. Consider the condition of soul which this ground represents:

i. A soul which once has been ploughed up by penitence, and prepared to receive the seed, but, from negligence, first one sin has been allowed to cross the yielding ground of the heart, disfiguring it with its footprints, and preparing the way for others, till at last, by the frequent passage of sin, the nature has become, like the ground in the parable, impervious to all spiritual impressions; the rain of grace may fall, but it quickly runs off without sinking into the hardened ground of that soul.

ii. The seed of the Word and Sacraments is sown, but cannot take root, and remains unused, until either the birds carry it off, or the ground is broken up, and it can germinate. We may observe here the answer to a difficulty—when a person receives a Sacrament, which cannot be repeated (*e. g.*, Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, or Holy Orders) without the proper dispositions or preparation, the Gift remains unused, but not lost, and when the soul is ploughed up by repentance, it is appropriated, or, theologically, *revives*.

iii. Our LORD traces the work of the birds to the personal agency of the devil (S. Luke, viii., 12); and each sowing makes the heart harder, because it invites the devil to come and spoil it, and so the heart grows hard under the plain dealings of God with it: you hear a sermon, which moves you, and go home, and try to drown thought by excited talking, or reading some sensational book, or going to the theatre, and this is the personal work of the devil.

III. Consider the remedy:

i. To plough up the ground again by a thorough repentance. Lent is especially the time to do this.

ii. To use regularly all means of grace, that more seed may be sown in your soul.

iii. To watch against the first temptations to sin.

Affections.—Examine what signs of this state of soul may be seen in your life; make acts of fear and contrition; pray for true penitence, and resolve to watch against the return of temptation to your besetting sin.

TUESDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

THE ROCKY GROUND.

"And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture."—S. Luke, viii., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Sower sadly gazing on the withered crops on the rocky ground.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be delivered from pride and superficiality in religion.

The rocky ground was not merely that from which the stones had not been gathered out, but that which had but a superficial covering of mould with rock beneath.

I. Consider the condition of the rocky ground:

i. The root could not strike deeply down, and so it put forth its energies more luxuriantly in the stalk.

ii. The radiation of heat from the rock caused it to grow very rapidly.

iii. The lack of moisture, which, on account of the action of the sun on the shallow ground, was more needed, caused it soon to wither.

II. Consider the condition of soul here represented: Not, like the wayside, hard-hearted, but, on the contrary, receiving the Word at once and with joy, but without endurance.

i. "*Yet hath he not root IN HIMSELF*"—S. Matt., xiii., 21. *i. e.*, no inward root: as the roots of a tree are out of sight, and yet from them it derives its firmness and stability, so upon the hidden life of the Christian his firmness and stability depend; and again, as it is through the hidden roots that the nourishment is drawn up to the stem and branches, so in the inner life, the life "*hid with Christ in God*," lie the sources of Christian strength and prosperity.

ii. Tribulations and temptations are compared to the heat of the sun; which, had the plant been deeply rooted enough, would have ripened it; but scorched and withered what lacked, from the same cause, both root and moisture; so trials, which would perfect the faith of a true Christian, cause that of the superficial man to fail.

iii. The whole difficulty arises from the rock underneath; so generally in the heart of the superficial is some rock, which stops all true growth; generally it is the rock of pride in some of its many forms.

III. Consider the Remedy:

i. Nothing can be done till the rock is removed, and this is not easily accomplished; it requires *blasting*, something which shakes the whole nature; sometimes a great fall or some great act of self-abasement will do this.

ii. The lack of moisture must be supplied by the continual use of all the means of grace; this class of soul requires this more than any other.

iii. The cultivation of the inner life: the pruning of all tendency to ostentation, and the deepening of the motives of action.

Affections.—Examine the depth of ground in your religious life, and try to find out what is the rock which impedes your spiritual growth; pray for endurance; and resolve to be thorough and sincere in your religion.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

THE THORNS.

"And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it." —S. Luke, viii., 7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the tangled crops of the careless farmers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligence in cultivating the good seed in your soul.

The seed did not fall among hedges of thorn, as some have said, but on prepared ground, in which the roots and seeds of thorns still existed, for S. Luke tells us that they "*sprang up with it.*"

I. Consider the condition of this ground :

i. It was not, as the first, hard soil ; nor, as the second, shallow soil ; here there was no fault in the soil.

ii. The fault was in the husbandry ; the ground had been ploughed, and, as far as eye could detect, looked ready for the seed ; but the old roots or seeds of thorns had been left in the ground, a fruitful source of future trouble.

iii. This is not entirely fruitless, but brings no fruit to perfection ; for the thorns, as they grow up with the good seed, both draw the moisture and richness of the earth away from the roots, and also choke the plant above the ground.

II. Consider the condition of soul here represented :

i. There is no fault in the temperament ; that may be noble and generous.

ii. The fault is either in the first great act of penitence—want of thoroughness, not going to the root of sins ; or else that afterwards the weeds of sin were allowed to grow unchecked, instead of being rooted up at their first appearance.

iii. This brings forth only imperfect fruit, and our LORD explains that the action of the thorns represents the effect of (*a.*) cares and (*b.*) riches and pleasures—two perfectly opposite causes producing the same result.

(*a.*) The oppressive side of life ; the poor man's struggle for bread ; this may be a help, if borne rightly.

(*b.*) The flattering side of life ; worldly success, riches, and pleasures ; this is always dangerous.

III. Consider the Remedy :

i. Thorough repentance—ploughing up the ground again and again, until all roots of sin are reached, and exterminated.

ii. Careful Self-Examination generally, and Particular Examination as to besetting sins.

iii. Endurance of the vicissitudes of earthly life in trusting reliance on GOD, seeking "*first the kingdom of GOD, and His Righteousness.*"

Affections.—Examine what thorns in your life are choking the good seed. pray for watchfulness ; resolve to practice, for one week, Particular Examination as to some one besetting sin.

THURSDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

THE GOOD SEED AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"The Seed is the Word of God."—S. Luke, viii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the people thronging the Altar, at the time of Celebration of the H. E.; and the Sower, in the person of His priest, sowing the good seed in their hearts.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always make a good Communion.

We may consider this parable, in its highest application, as warning us against the danger, not only of hearing the preached Word of GOD carelessly, but of receiving the Incarnate Word in the H. E. unworthily.

I. Consider the good seed:

i. It is CHRIST Himself, the Word of GOD, GOD the Word.

ii. That Body sown in the garden, where was the sepulchre; "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*"—S. John, xii., 24.

iii. He died, and fell into the ground, and the much fruit which He brought forth is the H. E.; and this is still the Seed of the woman, the Word of GOD, JESUS CHRIST.

II. Consider the four classes of Communicants:

i. Those who receive as a matter of course, while mortal sin prevents the working of the sacramental grace (the wayside).

ii. Those who receive with joy, and good resolutions; but, in the first attack of temptation, break their resolves, yield to sin, and drive JESUS forth from their hearts (the rocky ground).

iii. Those who make a good preparation, and a good Communion; but allow the cares and duties of life to engross their attention to the exclusion of CHRIST; those who, without actual sin, lose the grace of Communion by worldliness (among thorns).

iv. Those who receive the seed into honest and good hearts, and keep it by watchfulness; and bring forth fruit with patience; enduring all things, and persevering to the end.

III. Consider the preparation for a good Communion taught here:

i. Self-examination, getting up the thorns by the roots.

ii. Acts of humility and self-denial, removing the rock of pride.

iii. Acts of penitence, ploughing up all the paths made by sin in our hearts.

Affections.—Examine what is the flaw in your preparation for Communion; pray for grace to prepare rightly to receive the H. E.; resolve to watch, after Communion, lest the attacks of temptation steal JESUS out of your heart.

FRIDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

THE GOOD GROUND.

“And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold.”—S. Luke, viii., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Sower viewing with pleasure the healthy crops on the good ground.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for patience and perseverance.

I. Consider the condition of the good ground:

- i. It was part of the same field as the others; only good, because prepared.
- ii. *“Take heed therefore how ye hear”* (v. 18): this guards against the Calvinistic objection, that the states of ground were immutable: the other ground with cultivation might become good; this, without, would soon become evil.
- iii. Even this brought forth in different degrees: *“some an hundred fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.”*—S. Matt., xiii., 8.

II. Consider the condition of soul represented by the good ground:

- i. It is good ground, because ploughed up and prepared; in this it contrasts with the wayside.
- ii. *“Keep it”* (v. 15): in this is the contrast to the rocky ground; there perseverance was lacking.
- iii. *“Bring forth fruit with patience”* (v. 15): this meets the difficulty of the thorny ground; patient endurance of care, &c., and still bringing forth fruit.

III. Consider further that:

- i. Every act of sin is a treading down of the soil, a sowing it with thorns; our characters are not so much our natural dispositions, as the plastic Will of the child, moulded by the actions of life into one of these four sorts of ground.
- ii. The good ground brings forth some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold—four kinds of soils, and yet only three fruits; how is this? Perhaps there were only three soils, and the good ground is these three purged.
- iii. The three different returns may be taken, either as representing different degrees of fidelity, or different spheres of action, as in the parable of the talents.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of life; pray for patience and perseverance; resolve to prepare carefully your heart for the reception of the good seed.

SATURDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA.

CHARITY.

"Though I have *all* faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—I. Cor., xiii, 2-3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, after His Resurrection, thrice asking S. Peter the question: "*Lovest thou Me?*"

PRELUDE II.—Pray, in the words of to-morrow's Collect, for Charity.

I. Consider that the work of Lent is the exercise of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the fulfilment of the three duties of Fasting, Prayer, and Almsgiving.

i. Our Faith is exercised especially in our fasting and acts of self-denial.

ii. Our Hope is kindled by the acts of devotion we engage in, Prayer, Meditation, Communion, &c.

iii. Our Love is manifested in our Almsgiving, remembering the words of Him we love: "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*"—S. Matt., xxv., 40.

II. Consider the danger in Lent, against which the Epistle warns us, of doing all this in vain, because it does not spring from the right motive, divine Charity.

i. We are told (v. 2) that faith without charity is nothing; we may live as ascetics, but unless the motive springs from love of GOD, it is all in vain.

ii. We are told (v. 3) that almsgiving without charity profiteth nothing; we may give all our goods, but, if it is from vain glory or any other spring than charity, our reward is forfeited.

iii. If we have this charity, all will flow from it, for Charity "*believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*"—v. 7.

III. Consider that Charity is love of GOD *for His own sake*, and therefore love of man for GOD's sake; the two are inseparable. (I. S. John, iv., 20.)

i. This love is the great preventive of sin against either GOD or our neighbour.

ii. It is the great incentive to holiness, to doing our duty to GOD and our neighbour.

iii. It is the foundation of all true Penitence, and therefore very appropriate for our consideration on the threshold of Lent. Let us watch lest our work, during this holy season, be spoiled by lack of Charity.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and charity; pray for the gift of these virtues; resolve to exercise them this Lent.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE WAY TO JERUSALEM.

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem."—S. Luke, xviii., 31.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD clearly foretelling His Passion.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that this Lent you may indeed *go up* to Jerusalem with JESUS.

As Septuagesima struck the key-note of work, so Quinquagesima tells us clearly what the work of Lent is,—to follow our LORD in His Passion, to assist at a Crucifixion.

I. Consider our LORD's going up to Jerusalem :

i. He went up to the world's great battle-field, where was to be fought and won the decisive conflict between Good and Evil ; He went up with His Face steadfastly set ; He entered that city in triumph as a King, but, as they cried Hosanna, how little they realized *how* He was to save them.

ii. The details of the struggle are recorded in the history of Holy-Week, in the story of the Passion.

iii. The result is seen on Good-Friday, in His Expulsion from the City, and His Crucifixion.

II. Consider our going up to Jerusalem : We are called, not only to follow JESUS in His Passion, by thinking about Him, but by actually imitating Him.

i. Lent is indeed "*the time when Kings go forth to battle*."—II. Sam., xi., 1. Do we go up with eagerness to the fight, do we enter on Lent in a kingly spirit, determined to conquer, for our foe is the same as our LORD's ; and our weapons, and plan of battle, must be the same too.

ii. The details of the battle are chiefly in learning from CHRIST to suffer.

iii. The end : when Lent draws to a close and Good-Friday comes, it will find us gathered around a cross, which we have erected ; gazing on a form, which we have crucified ; whose form ? our own *self*, crucified by our Lenten struggle, the Victory won, our sins driven forth from the city of our hearts ; or our LORD, crucified afresh by our sins, the battle won by Satan, Jesus driven forth again from the city of our soul.

III. Consider that our going up to Jerusalem ends not with Lent :

i. We are ever going up, it is the journey of life, *ἀναβαίνωμεν*, present tense, showing that the act is going on ; the very same word and tense, which our LORD used after His Resurrection (S. John, xx., 17), "*Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I AM ascending (ἀναβαίνω) unto My Father, and your Father ; and to My God, and your God*." When Lent is past and Easter reached, it must be only a truer *going up* to a better Jerusalem.

ii. The Way leads us, where it led our LORD, to the grave.

iii. It stops not there, it breaks through the sepulchral stone, it leads us, where it led JESUS, to the throne of glory.

Affections.—Gratitude to CHRIST for all He suffered for us ; pray for fidelity, resolve to follow, this Lent, in the Way to Jerusalem.

MONDAY AFTER QUINQUAGESIMA.

SEASONS OF GRACE.

"And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus. Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."—S. Luke, xviii., 36-40.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene: the blind beggar by the roadside, and JESUS and the multitude sweeping past.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may seize every opportunity of grace, "*redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*"—Eph., v., 16.

I. Consider the circumstances:

- i. The blind beggar—the type of the world in its blindness—sitting by the king's highway of the Holy Cross,—that way which leads to Jerusalem.
- ii. The multitude following JESUS out of Jericho in *that* way; the figure of those who, in Lent, leave the world to follow JESUS in the way of sorrows.
- iii. The blind man hears the tumult, and asks what it means; so the world, although in its blindness it cannot see the reason, cannot help hearing about Lent,—hearing the stir which is being made throughout the Church now, in preparation for keeping Lent, and, like Bartimeus, asks what it means.

II. Consider the answer: "*Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.*"

- i. He passes by; He does not stand still; He ever makes as though He would go further. (S. Mark, vi., 48; S. Luke, xxiv., 28.)
- ii. He passes by, ready to heal and bless. Think of some of His visits.—your Confirmation; first Communion; some great sorrow or sickness; your mother's death-bed, &c.
- iii. He passes by this Lent, and listens for *your* cry, have mercy on me. How sad if you cry too late,—if the answer comes back, JESUS of Nazareth has passed by; the door is shut, the day of grace gone.

III. Consider the obstacles:

- i. They rebuked him. How little sympathy the world gives us when we are feeling our soul's needs and crying for help.
- ii. They told him to hold his peace. How many efforts our three foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil, make to stifle our cries.
- iii. He cried so much the more. And they said: "*Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee.*"—S. Mark, x., 49. He persevered, and the world soon changed its treatment. How true to experience is this. If a man will only persevere, in spite of the world, they who began by saying "he is mad," will end by exclaiming "he is a Saint". So let us, this Lent, persevere in our cry to our LORD for help.

Affections.—Realize the misery of blindness, and the responsibility of opportunities of grace; pray for healing; resolve to persevere throughout this Lent in your good resolutions, in spite of all obstacles.

SHROVE-TUESDAY.

CASTING AWAY THE GARMENT.

"*And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.*"—S. Mark, x., 50.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the blind man coming to JESUS for healing.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have light to see what keeps you back from CHRIST, and grace to give it up.

I. Consider the condition of Bartimeus :

i. He was blind, and a beggar ; his calling was an aggravation of the misery of his blindness, in the order of nature ; but, in the spiritual order, it is worse to be blind and not to be a beggar—not to realize our need of help.

ii. He was outside of Jericho, on the road to Jerusalem ; S. Luke (xviii., 35) speaks of our LORD finding him as He entered Jericho ; SS. Matt. and Mark of the cure taking place the next day, as JESUS was leaving Jericho ; Maldonatus and others suppose that on our LORD's entrance He passed the blind man, but did not heal him then, although he cried out for help ; but the next day the blind man shewed his faith by stationing himself on the road by which our LORD would pass out of Jericho. This represents those who, feeling their misery, have left the world, and are only waiting for their eyes to be opened to follow CHRIST.

iii. "*He calleth for thee.*" What words of comfort, and joy, to Bartimeus. What did he do ? He cast away his garment, rose, and came to JESUS.

II. Consider the casting away of the garment :

i. He could have come to CHRIST without casting it away, but it rather hindered him. What is the hindrance which makes you so slow in coming to CHRIST ? What is there which is lawful, but not expedient, which you might give up this Lent ?

ii. When you hear the call, do you stop to calculate the possibility of getting to JESUS with your garment ?—do you say, this is not necessary, I can get to heaven without giving up that ?

iii. What is the garment of sin you need to cast away this Lent—the *habit* of sin, perhaps, which clothes you, as it were, like a garment ?

III. Consider the result : "*And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*"—S. Mark, x., 52.

i. The result of his coming so quickly was that he received his sight immediately.

ii. The result of receiving his sight was that he followed JESUS in THE WAY. What way ? The way to Jerusalem, with JESUS and the Saints.

iii. That way was full of sorrows : it led through the dark night of the Passion, through pain, humiliation, the Cross, the grave ; but, his eyes being opened, he saw all these things in their relation to eternity, and followed.

Affections.—Realize that there is no way to the Crown but by the Cross ; pray that your eyes may be more opened to see these things ; resolve to follow JESUS, at all costs, to Jerusalem.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, I.—AGAINST ANGER.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—S. Luke, xxiii., 34.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, as the cruel nails fastened Him to the Cross, preaching by word and example, this sublime Sermon against Anger.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, by Thy word of forgiveness, O LORD, deliver me from anger, and make me meek and forgiving.

On the Wednesdays in Lent, let us consider the Cross as the Pulpit from which our LORD, with His dying Words, preaches the seven great Sermons against the Seven Deadly sins. He was then bearing all the sins of the world, which may be arranged under these seven heads, and, as He speaks, we may consider each Word as a Sermon against one class of sin.

I. Consider the Sin of Anger: Its marks were visible in the distorted faces around our LORD'S Cross.

i. It causes perhaps the greatest amount of unhappiness to others, breaking up the peace of family life.

ii. It makes us slaves to our own tempers; it is incompatible with spiritual growth, or interior peace.

iii. It *generally* has its root in the sin of pride; we are angry, because our pride is hurt; if we were humble, we should not feel irritated.

II. Consider some of our LORD'S teaching as to Anger:

i. He shows that thoughts, and words, as well as deeds, come under this sin. (S. Matt., v., 21-27.)

ii. He was angry once (S. Mark, iii., 5) at the hardness of men's hearts; indignant at their sin against GOD, not angry with the sinner.

iii. On the Cross, when they had done all to injure Him, He manifested no anger. We must be very careful not to deceive ourselves about our anger, and to persuade ourselves we are indignant with the sin against GOD, when we are only smarting under wounded pride. Be angry with the sin; forgive the sinner.

III. Consider the Remedy for Anger, as taught by our LORD:

i. To realize "*they know not what they do*," how true it is, half the time people have no intention of annoying or hurting us; and when they do so purposely, they do not know how great a sin they are committing. Our LORD made excuses for those who injured Him, let us always try to do the same.

ii. To pray for those who have irritated us: "*Father, forgive them*"; we can hardly continue angry with a person for whom we are really praying, and thus we return good for evil.

iii. To be reconciled with them, as far as we are concerned: If thou rememberest that thy brother hath "*ought against thee*" (never mind what you have against him), "*first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*."—S. Matt., v., 24. It is important to understand clearly what this reconciliation requires, for people are often greatly distressed, and even kept from Communion, because they cannot effect a reconciliation, though doing their part. The Greek word for "*be reconciled*" is *διαλλάγηθαι*. This is the only place where the word is used in the New Testament. The verb *αλλάσσεσθαι* means literally to effect a change in the relation of two parties to each other; it is found in the New Testament, compounded with the prepositions *δια*, *κατα*, and *συν*; all are translated by one word, "reconciled", in our version; the distinction seems to be that (1) *διαλλάσσεσθαι*, used only here, signifies merely to put a stop to the conflict by the separation of the parties, which would be the case if one retired from the quarrel; (2) *καταλλάσσεσθαι*, which occurs ten times, and of our LORD'S work of reconciliation, implies that some mutual agreement has been produced; (3) *συναλλάσσεσθαι*, used but once, Acts, vii., 26 (and this is an emendation on the authority of Codex Vaticanus, Ephraemi, Bezae and Sinaiticus), signifies alliance and future co-operation. Hence nothing impossible is enjoined here, simply to do your part in the work of reconciliation. The best explanation is, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*."—Rom., xii., 18.

Affections.—Realize the deadly evil of Anger; examine yourself on the sin of Anger; pray for meekness; resolve, when tempted by any one person whom you are often thrown with, to use our LORD'S first Word from the Cross, as an ejaculatory prayer.

FIRST THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, I.—JACOB.

"How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."—Gen., xxviii., 17. (Read, also, vv. 10-22)

PRELUDE I.—Picture Jacob at Bethel, a weary exile, resting for the night, with only stones for a pillow; and yet, in all his trouble, seeing into Heaven in his dream.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in our exile here on earth we may ever see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the Right Hand of God.

I. Jacob's Exile:

i. Consider Jacob as an exile from his country and father's house, doing penance for his sin; how sad and lonely he must have felt, when the sun set, and he lay down on the hard ground to sleep, with only stones for his pillow, a long exile before him; how, in the darkness and coldness of that night, he might have felt inclined to despair.

ii. Consider the wonderful vision in God's mercy given to help him to bear his exile, and to fulfil his penance; the promise of protection in his wanderings, "*Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land;*" and then that still greater promise to be fulfilled in the future, "*In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*"

iii. Remember the fulfilment of all this, and how GOD brought him back to his father's house.

II. Jacob is a type of ourselves:

i. Are we not, as long as we are in this world, exiles from our Father's House, "strangers and pilgrims," doing penance for Adam's sin and our own, hoping one day to return to our Father's House, knowing that "*God doth devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him*"? Are we not sometimes ready to despair, as the sun sets, and we feel our loneliness and misery?

ii. What have we to cheer and give us strength for the journey?—the Blessed Sacrament; the Vision of God; the Ladder joining earth and heaven, around which the angels cluster; the fulfilment of those gracious promises, "*Lo, I am with you always.*" "*If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.*" "*The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is even He that shall keep thy soul.*" "*The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in*"; the pledge and means of the further promise, "*Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day,*" "*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.*"

iii. Remember how the life of union begun here on earth, through our Communions, will be consummated in the eternal union of heaven.

III. Our Preparation, Communion, and Thanksgiving:

i. Preparation: The Blessed Sacrament is always with us, and yet we do not always see the Vision. How does God prepare us to see it? By troubles, which make us realize that we are indeed exiles here, which make us long for a glimpse of Home, of Heaven, to cheer us; and which lead us to the Holy Eucharist, that we may there have a glimpse of Heaven. It was not until the sun set that Jacob had the Vision. How often it is so with us! Not until the sun of prosperity has gone down, and the dark night of tribulation begins, have some of us sufficient spiritual sight to see Heaven opened through our Communions.

ii. Communion: Consider that the Holy Eucharist, as the great extension of the Incarnation, is that which unites God and man, earth and heaven; that at the time of Celebration, Angels and all the Company of Heaven surround the Altar on which Jesus is; that when we go up to the Altar, we go up amidst the Company of Heaven; that through our Communion we are to receive an ever-increasing revelation of JESUS CHRIST. Eucharistic Meditation is most truly the Illuminative Way. The Blessed Sacrament is like Jacob's Vision in all things, only no dream, but a most true reality.

iii. Thanksgiving: Thank Him for having given you the Vision of Heaven: like Jacob, offer a sacrifice; offer yourself, your soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him, accept the trials of life as a penance, deserved by your sins. "*Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.*" After a careless Communion how often we have to say this, that we have acted as though we knew it not by letting our thoughts wander. Make your vow, and promise, if He will be with you, and keep you safe in your exile, and give you the Bread of Heaven to nourish you, and bring you back at last in peace to your Father's House, Heaven, He shall be your God, and you will serve Him faithfully throughout your exile, and will often come to worship Him at Bethel, the House of God, the Blessed Sacrament.

Affections—Pray that troubles may ever bring you nearer to God; pray Him to open your eyes, that you may see the Vision of Him in the Holy Eucharist; resolve that He shall be your God, and that at Bethel you will adore Him on His Altar-Throne

FIRST FRIDAY IN LENT.

THE CROSS THE MAGNET OF SOULS.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—S. John, xii., 32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the multitude drawing near to the Cross on Calvary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be drawn very near to the Cross this Lent.

The Holy Cross on Calvary is the central object of attraction for the world, and, like some ancient building on a lofty hill, it may be regarded from many different points of view. Let us on the Fridays in Lent consider some of these aspects, and to-day, the Magnet of souls.

I. Consider the attraction of the Cross of CHRIST :

i. Like the loadstone mountain of fable, all souls that come within sight are irresistibly drawn to it ; no, not all ; a magnet does not attract everything—only iron, that metal which by the discipline of fire and the hammer becomes true steel. So the Cross, only those souls that have the capacity of being developed by suffering.

ii. The attracting power is love. *"I drew them . . . with bands of love."*—Hosea, xi., 4.

iii. Self-sacrificing love ; not ordinary love, but a nobler passion ; a love stronger than death, which proves its strength by dying ; a love which awakens emulation by its self-sacrifice, and leads men to martyrdom by its attractive power.

II. Consider the attraction of our own Cross :

i. What is our Cross ? What sorrow, pain, humiliation ? What most contrary to nature ? Hard though it be, it attracts us, if we have noble souls, with a strange fascination ; others it repels.

ii. We learn to love to suffer, as a proof of love ; we love not suffering for its own sake, but for His, Who *"suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."*—I. S. Pet., ii., 21.

iii. The Cross is the tree shown us by God (as He shewed Moses of old), which, as we pass through the trials of life, will ever sweeten the bitter waters of our Marahs. (Exodus, xv., 23–24.)

III. Consider the attraction of the Cross in Lent :

i. It is lifted up each Lent, and never was Standard raised which drew men to it with such magnetic power. Under this banner in Lent are ranged all the noble of the earth.

ii. Think of the multitudes of souls which each Good-Friday finds prostrate in adoring love at the Cross's foot. It loses not its power. How many Lents have passed, and yet the Passion seems to speak each year to the soul with stronger power, the old story has an ever-new life ; it is the test of souls. *"Shall we be there ?"* We shall prove ourselves, or rather the Cross will prove us this Lent, whether we are true steel or not.

iii. When Good-Friday is over the empty Cross points through the opened skies, for the Cross has its place in heaven. *"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*—Rev., xxii., 2.

Affections.—Adore our Blessed LORD's self-sacrificing love ; pray that you may have courage to suffer for Him ; resolve to take up cheerfully your Cross, and to follow Him.

FIRST SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, I.—TEMPTATION.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."—S. Matt., iv., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD passing from the glories of His Baptism to His conflict with Satan.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that this Lent you may be faithful in temptation.

I. Consider the signification of the word Temptation, the one word which sums up the history of the soul's life here :

i. In Holy Scripture it has three applications :

(a) To bring out virtues, and in this sense GOD tempts us. (Gen., xxii., 1.)

(b) To solicit to sin, and thus the devil tempts us. (I. Thess., iii., 5.)

(c) To provoke to indignation, and thus we tempt GOD. (Ps. xcv., 9.)

ii. The special temptations of Lent :

(a) GOD tempts us to prove which we love best, ourselves or Him ; our souls or bodies ; obedience to the Church, or to our own inclinations.

(b) The devil tempts us to sin ; by not mortifying our bodies (*i. e.*, not to fast) ; by indulging in the attractions of the world instead of devotional exercises ; and if we resist these two, then by spiritual pride to forfeit the victory we have won over the world and the flesh.

(c) We must watch and pray lest we tempt GOD this Lent ; by neglecting the opportunity ; by hardening our hearts to the calls He may send us ; and stifling the voice of the Holy Spirit, by refusing to take some painful step to which He may lead us.

iii. Why GOD permits the devil to tempt :

iv. The devil was permitted to tempt our LORD, that HE might prove and break the power of every temptation by which we may be assaulted, and to teach us to expect, and to show us how to meet, temptation.

v. The devil is permitted to tempt us to draw out of us virtues (Job) ; to keep us vigilant (I. S. Peter, v., 8) ; and that GOD may reward us for enduring (S. James, i., 12).

II. Consider the leading of the Spirit : *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit"* :

i. The Holy Ghost is our Leader unto all good works ; He leads, but He does not *constrain* us.

ii. He leads us *up* to heaven ; Satan is ever trying to cast us *down* to earth ; we see this in each of the three temptations.

iii. The Holy Ghost will guide us in keeping this Lent, by the Voice of the Church, and of our own conscience.

III. Consider the place of the temptation ; the wilderness :

i. Our LORD went there immediately after His Baptism, to teach us that by Baptism we are called to renounce the world, to mortify the flesh, and to resist the devil.

ii. To teach us also that our life, from Baptism on, must be one of temptation, that our promise to be CHRIST'S faithful soldiers to our life's end has to be fulfilled. *"Is there not a warfare to man upon earth ?"*—Job, vii., 1.

iii. To teach us that the world must ever be a wilderness to us ; do we not often forget this, and act as though it were our home ; as long as like JESUS we are being led up of the Spirit into the wilderness we are safe, for we are on our way HOME ; and through the wilderness the Spirit will not only guide us, but supply us with strength to overcome all the temptations which may assail us on our journey.

Affections.—Realize that Lent is a special season of temptation ; pray for grace ; and resolve to make every effort to conquer your besetting sin this Lent.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE TRIAL OF LONELINESS.

"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."—Gen., xl., 23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Joseph languishing in the prison, forgotten and alone!

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all trials of loneliness may lead you to CHRIST for sympathy and comfort.

Joseph is one of the most perfect types of our LORD. To-day, as we are reminded of our LORD's solitude in the wilderness, let us trace one feature in which, throughout his life, Joseph was a type of CHRIST—his loneliness.

I. Consider Joseph, misunderstood, unsympathized with, in fact alone in spirit, in every scene of his life:

i. Among his brethren: Utter want of sympathy; suspicion, envy, hatred; trace the course of their feelings to him.

ii. In the house of Potiphar: As a servant winning the esteem of his master, and yet given up by him on a false accusation; while there, no one to sympathize with him but one, and she became his temptation; alone in temptation: "*she spake to Joseph day by day.*"

iii. In the prison: Fellow-prisoners not sympathizing with him; the butler, who promised so much, forgetting him.

iv. As ruler of Egypt: Courted, admired, but still lonely; no one to whom he could talk of the religion which was the strength of his life; the father he loved so passionately far away—he knew not whether alive or dead.

v. The tendency of this would be to make most men sour, morose, or slothful: It led him to active works of mercy; he found his happiness in relieving the needs and sufferings of others, in being useful, and in doing this is abundantly rewarded, in saving his father's life.

II. Consider how our LORD's life fulfils this feature of its type:

i. Among His brethren at Nazareth, among the Jews, even among His Apostles: unappreciated, often misunderstood.

ii. In the house of Pilate: Pilate, like Potiphar, believing in His integrity, and yet, at the demand of others, giving Him up to punishment.

iii. In the prison: As Joseph brought good tidings to the butler, and bad to the baker, so our LORD fulfils the type on the Cross, between the two thieves, to one of whom He promises salvation; and again in Hades, releasing the "prisoners of hope," and proclaiming to the reprobate their doom.

iv. As the Ruler: In His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, with the crowds following,—still lonely in spirit, knowing that in a few days the same streets would ring with a different shout.

III. Consider this trial as it appears in our own life:

i. In our home life: Religious differences; persecution because we are really in earnest about serving GOD; our motives misinterpreted, our views ridiculed.

ii. In business life: Companions tempting us to neglect religious duties; laughing at us for being so strait-laced; tempting us to sin; alone with temptation; and this going on day by day.

iii. In adversity: How friends fall off; how little sympathy we get; how true to experience was the butler's forgetfulness.

iv. In prosperity: Worldly success is often attended with secret cares gnawing the heart, family sorrows, &c.; a prosperous life may have its loneliness.

v. Let us learn from Joseph, and from our LORD, two things: To meet this trial by realization of GOD's presence as our solace, and by active work for others' benefit, that our life may be a useful life.

Affections.—Realize how little true sympathy the world can give; pray that all trials may lead you to draw nearer to CHRIST; resolve to be unselfish, and to let your own sorrows help you to alleviate the sorrows of others.

FIRST MONDAY IN LENT.

SIN.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I. S. John, i., 7-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the miseries of earth, the pains of hell, or the Passion of JESUS, as the results of sin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may truly repent of your sins.

What is sin? Transgression of the law, disobedience; missing the mark, moral failure. Sin, in its nature, is the presence of a person in the soul, in its effect, it leaves the objective mark or stain, which we call Guilt; and this is not merely an unwholesome atmosphere, but something external to ourselves, which comes to us from without, and can only be taken away by the application of something from without.

I. Consider some of the divisions of sins:

- i. The three ways of committing sin: By thought, word, and deed.
- ii. The two divisions into material and formal sin; *i. e.*, sins of ignorance, and sins of knowledge.
- iii. The two classes, as regards degree: mortal, and venial sin.

II. Consider mortal sin: *"There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."*—I. S. John, v., 16.

i. In its effect:

(a.) It cuts the soul off from grace: *"Quench not the Spirit."*—I. Thess., v., 19.

(b.) It robs the soul of all its good works. (Ezek., xviii., 24.)

(c.) It wounds the soul in all its powers. (S. Luke, x., 30.)

ii. In its essence, it must be—

(a.) Material; *i. e.*, *"weighty matter"* (Visitation of Sick).

(b.) Formal; there must be a consciousness of its guilt.

(c.) Deliberate; there must be consent of the will.

iii. It is difficult to draw the line as to what is *"sin unto death"*, but the Bible gives several lists (*e. g.*, Gal., v., 19-22; S. Matt., xv., 19). It requires something more than prayer: a definite remedy—the Sacramental application of the Precious Blood. *"I do not say that he shall pray for it."* *"The Blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin."*

III. Consider venial sin. *"All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."*

i. In its effect: It does not cut the soul off from grace, but it hinders the working of grace, grieves the Holy Spirit, and prepares the way for mortal sin.

ii. In its essence: It is incompatible with real love of God, and, if persevered in, stops spiritual growth.

iii. Its remedy is prayer, and watchfulness.

Affections.—Realize the guilt of sin, and the danger of self-deception as to one's own sins; pray for light to see your sins; resolve to repent of all your sins.

FIRST TUESDAY IN LENT.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ACTORS IN THE PASSION.—JUDAS.

"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon."
—S. John, vi., 70-71.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the traitor's kiss in the garden of Gethsemane.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perfect sincerity in your religious life.

Judas is not a warning to sinners, but to religious people; a man full of good points, one we should admire; the practical business man of the College of Apostles; one besetting sin in his character, covetousness; one great flaw in his religious life, want of openness.

I. Consider his conversion, and following of CHRIST:

i. It was a real conversion:

(a.) How much he gave up—all his covetousness to embrace a life of poverty; what a real sacrifice! At first there was no temptation; after a time it became necessary to have an almoner (S. Luke, viii., 3). he was probably chosen because he seemed fittest to the other Apostles; he had to *face again* his besetting sin; how often this is so with us.

(b.) How much he endured of hardship and privation in following our LORD.

(c.) He followed *almost* to the end.

ii. He had a real vocation: "*Have not I chosen you?*"

(a.) Our LORD chose him, because he had peculiar fitness for the Apostolate.

(b.) He had the same gifts as the other Apostles, but a spirit of temporizing; looking at things in a practical, worldly, business-like way, as he thought.

(c.) Yet with it all he loved JESUS; had given up much to follow Him.

II. Consider the progress of his besetting sin; at last Covetousness became a mortal sin, and he lost grace:

i. At Capernaum; and then for the first time he lost faith in JESUS, when our LORD gave His great instruction on the Real Presence, Judas said in his heart, "I don't believe what He says;" the cause of his loss of faith was the mortal sin in his heart; then JESUS warned him (S. John, vi., 64 and 70); it was one year before the betrayal.

ii. Then he became a thief; excuses, perhaps to pay some debt, or for the support of his wife and children.

iii. It becomes open at Bethany; the excuse philanthropy. (S. John, xii., 5-6.)

iv. The bargain with the Priests. (S. Matt., xxvi., 14-15.)

v. The last supper; the warning; is it? then hardened after his sacrilegious Communion (S. Matt., xxvi., 25); this commemorated at every Celebration as a warning to us; "in the night in which He was *betrayed* He took bread."

vi. The scene in the garden of so many holy memories; the soldiers falling to the ground, and yet the kiss; who supported him? the devil; he was a devil (S. John, vi., 70); and then the despair; the devil left him to that; and then the confession, restitution, and suicide; he was not lost because of his sin, but because he did not repent.

III. Consider how many warnings he had. Many of the sayings of JESUS gain a new force, when we remember that they were said in Judas's presence:

i. e. g., "*No man can serve two masters.*" "*the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word;*" the parable of the Steward; unfaithful in the unrighteous Mammon; the camel and the needle.

ii. If he had only been *open* with our LORD; how often perhaps he was on the point of speaking about his secret sin; but emotions were trifled with, opportunities neglected; how dangerous is that proud reserve, which keeps its sins locked in its own heart; be open, and all may yet be well.

IV. Consider some points in which Judas is like ourselves:

i. He had a sweet, a powerful call from JESUS; so we.

ii. He once loved JESUS, and got to know Him on familiar terms; so we.

iii. He began with venial sins and self-seeking; so we.

iv. He did not know how hard his heart was getting; so we.

Affections—Fear at the possibilities of evil in us; gratitude for God's patience with us; sorrow for past unfaithfulness; resolve to conquer besetting sin, especially by openness and sincerity in religious life.

SECOND WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, II.—AGAINST PRIDE.

"Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—S. Luke, xxiii, 43.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the extreme humiliation of our LORD upon the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, good LORD, deliver me.

This was said to one whose life had been an open sin against God; when he repented and prayed, our LORD absolved him, and took him to be His own for ever. The whole incident is a sermon against Pride.

I. Consider the sin of Pride:

i. Its deadliness: Like a drop of poison, it kills the best actions of our lives.
ii. Its universality: It is the Root-sin of all, to be found in almost every one. It was the first sin, that of the angels; it is the great hindrance to repentance.

iii. Like the rocky ground in the parable of the Sower, it needs some great shock to shatter it. In the thief, the shame and agony of crucifixion.

II. Consider the thief as a witness against Pride:

i. He openly confesses himself in the wrong, and breaks with his companion; "*the due reward of our deeds*," a great act of humility to renounce his friend, and all his past life at the last.

ii. He acknowledges, as his God, one suffering like himself in ignominy.

iii. He patiently accepts present punishment as just, and humbly asks for future remembrance.

III. Consider our LORD's Sermon against Pride:

i. The acceptance of the intense shame, and humiliation of the crucifixion.

ii. The thief had before reviled our LORD; how lovingly He answered.

iii. He shares His Spiritual Kingdom, which He has won at such a cost, with a thief. Do I ever think others unworthy to share with me the blessings of the Church? Have I ever despised others?

IV. Consider the lesson of Penitence here:

i. "*Lord, remember me*": It was the proof of the thief's faith, and love, and humility; he did not say forget me, and my sins; but like S. Peter, LORD Thou knowest all things, all my sins, Thou knowest that I love Thee. How anxious we are that our sins should be hidden, and forgotten, through pride; Humility is the first essential to penitence, and it will lead us to confess our sins.

ii. "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise*": This was the Word of Absolution, the first two words (recorded only in the Gospel of the Priesthood, S. Luke's), the Intercession for sinners; the Absolution of the penitent.

iii. The penance: He was forgiven, but he had to suffer just the same, he was really crucified; so we must often bear the cross of the results of our sins, as our penance; and then, what an immense trial of his faith, to see his Saviour die! for JESUS died first; his Absolution shewed no fruits in this life.

Affections.—Realize the havoc among souls made by the sin of pride, examine yourself on this sin, and find out what is your special form of pride; pray for the grace of humility; and resolve to perform some act which will humble you.

SECOND THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, II.—JOSEPH.

"He satisfieth the empty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness," —Ps. cvii., 9. (Read, also, Gen., xlv., 4-12.)

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene in Joseph's house, when he made himself known to his brethren.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may so grieve for the affliction of the true Joseph and for our sins which caused that affliction, that we may hear Him say, *"Come near to Me," "Be not grieved."*

I. Consider Joseph as a type of our LORD in the Blessed Sacrament :

i. He is the beloved son of his father, and his brethren reject him and sell him to strangers ; by these strangers he is put in prison for three years, and while in prison he astonishes those in the prison by his power of foretelling. In the three days that our LORD is in Hades, He preaches to the spirits that are in prison.

ii. He is brought out of prison and exalted to be ruler over the king's house. Being exalted, he saves the lives of his brethren by giving them corn. CHRIST does the same, by giving us the Corn of the elect, the Bread of angels, the finest of the flour of wheat.

iii. He says to His brethren, *"Come near to Me ;"* CHRIST says these words to us in the H. E.

II. Our Preparation. Communion, and Thanksgiving :

i. *How does He prepare us for the Blessed Sacrament ?*

(a.) By a sense of famine: like Joseph's brothers, *"for the famine was sore in the land ;"* like the Prodigal, *"I perish with hunger ;"* we must feel that without the Holy Eucharist we must starve indeed.

(b.) By troubles which bring our sins to our remembrance : *"We are verily guilty concerning our brother,"* &c. ; *"Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled, then cried I unto Thee, O Lord, and gat me to my Lord right humbly."*

(c.) By humbling us in Confession : *"We are verily guilty,"* &c. ; *"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants."*

(d.) By full and unreserved forgiveness, absolution, the kiss of peace, *"he kissed all his brethren."*

ii. Consider our Communion : *"God did send me before you to preserve life," "be not grieved."* It was necessary that CHRIST should go through the prison of the grave, in order to preserve our life by giving us the Corn of the angels. *"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."*—S. John, xii., 24. Our LORD was the corn of wheat ; by His falling into the ground and dying, He has brought forth much fruit ; and that fruit is the Blessed Sacrament, to feed us when we must otherwise starve.

iii. Consider our Thanksgiving : *"Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto Me . . . and there will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine ; lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast come to poverty."* Is not this true in regard to the Blessed Sacrament ? Years of famine, as long as we are in this world ; the only food the Corn of the true Joseph ; we must dwell near Him, or we shall come to poverty indeed. Thank Him for not only feeding you with His most Holy Body, when you were starving, but also for His gracious promise, *"Thou shalt dwell near unto Me ;"* for repeating at every Celebration the loving invitation, *"Come near to Me, I pray you."*

Affections.—Colloquy with our LORD in His Passion, asking His pardon for your share in His afflictions ; pray that you may realize the famine of the world ; desire that your troubles may bring your sins to mind, and lead you to true repentance ; resolve to dwell near to Joseph in the Blessed Sacrament by frequent Communions carefully prepared for.

SECOND FRIDAY IN LENT.

THE CROSS THE ARK IN THE FLOOD.

"And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters."—Gen. vii., 17-18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Ark floating on the waters.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to cling ever to the Cross.

I. Consider the history of the Ark upon the Waters:

i. "*The waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth*": The flood now of sin, worldliness, infidelity, &c., covering the earth, and increasing; the rain descending for forty days, the life of man; the flood drowning, destroying, swallowing up all, but one family, prevailing over all, but the Ark.

ii. "*And the ark went upon the face of the waters*": The Ark prepared by the command of GOD, think of it, floating, washed here and there by the winds and waves, and yet always safe; so ought we to float on our cross; are we nailed to it, so that we cannot be washed off? driven here and there by the flood we may be, but, as long as we are clinging to the Cross, always safe.

iii. "*And the waters increased, and bare up the ark*": As wickedness prevails in the world it does but bear up the Cross, for the Cross stands out in grander relief, with less of compromise; that is the great danger, having the Cross in a gilded, jewelled form; the Ark lifted up! It is so with individuals with their Cross; it was so with JESUS; the Cross was laid on the ground, and JESUS nailed to it; the next step, the increase of the waters, was the lifting it up between earth and heaven; so the flood with us, if we are nailed to our Cross, it will but lift up our Cross, and ourselves with it, further and further from earth, nearer and nearer to heaven.

II. Consider the experiences of the one family in the Ark:

i. "*And Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark*"—

v. 23. Noah represents JESUS; sin destroys all souls but those who are safely nailed with JESUS to the Cross; some escape the flood for a little while, but at last it covers the high places of the earth, and all are destroyed but those with Noah in the Ark. To be with JESUS on the Cross is the only place of safety.

ii. Some left the Ark, *i. e.*, the Raven and the Dove; so some souls try to get loosed from the Cross, and to leave it.

(a.) The Raven in the Ark, brooding and discontented like Judas among the twelve, represents those souls who weary of the restraints of their Cross, and bear it grudgingly, and watch for and embrace the first opportunity to escape from it; they, like the Raven, wander to and fro over the earth, but no rest.

(b.) The Dove, too, but the emblem of the pure soul, finding no rest in the world returns to the Ark, to her Noah; "*Turn again then unto thy REST, O my soul*" (Noah=Rest).—Ps. cxvi., 7.

iii. At last the Dove goes forth not to return,—to wing its way over a new earth;—the laying down of the Cross at death, the going forth to a new land, where the waters are assuaged, where will be Noah and the Ark; JESUS, but not on the Cross, the Cross there as the trophy of Victory, as the Ark remained on Ararat, the memorial of salvation.

Affections.—Realize, when troubles come, that they only raise your Cross; pray that you may float on your Cross conformed to the Will of GOD; resolve to flee to the only place of safety, to be like the Dove.

SECOND SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, II.—THE TEMPTER.

“*The tempter came to Him.*”—S. Matt., iv., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in the solitude of the wilderness, alone with GOD, and the devil.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, in all times of temptation, you may realize the presence of those two witnesses of your life.

I. Consider the Personality of the Tempter:

i. In this great duel the two Personalities are clearly opposed, the Son of GOD, and the Devil; Satan's words and actions, and our LORD's replies. Especially the last, where He addresses him by name, Satan, leave no room for doubt.

ii. In the great type, the single combat between David and Goliath, both the personality of the devil and all the details of our LORD's temptation are clearly seen: For forty days Goliath had been defying the armies of Israel, when David entered the lists; his weapons were five smooth stones, chosen from a flowing brook, and placed in his shepherd's bag; he only used one of the five, and after Goliath's fall it was with the giant's own sword that he cut off his head. So David's great Son conquered our spiritual Goliath, having from the flowing stream of the Scriptures taken the five Books of Moses, the Books of the Law, which He puts into the pastoral scrip of the Gospel; He uses but one, Deuteronomy, from which Book come all three of our LORD's answers; in the temptation Jesus overthrows the devil; by the Crucifixion He cuts off his head with his own sword, death, conquering death by dying.

iii. *ὁ πειράζων*, the present participle, as in our LORD's title; *ὁ Σπειρών* the Sower, implies the ceaseless nature of the devil's work of tempting.

II. Consider the Tempter's opportunities:

i. Especially times of devotion and solitude; any spiritual exercise is like a challenge to him, which he is not slow to accept.

ii. Especially with those who are trying to lead a holy life; *e. g.*, our LORD, and Job.

iii. He comes under various forms; in our LORD's case he came:

(a.) As a MAN, moved with compassion for his famishing condition.

(b.) As an ANGEL, bearing Him to the Holy City.

(c.) As a GOD, demanding worship.

III. Consider the Tempter's object:

i. To find out whether CHRIST were indeed the Son of GOD, as proclaimed at His Baptism.

ii. So he comes to test whether we are, as we profess, the children of GOD.

iii. To make us doubt: “*If*” Thou be, &c. So with Eve, he suggests a doubt: “*Hath God said?*”

IV. Consider the Tempter's schemes:

i. To get us to do good by wrong means. We see this in each of the temptations; he tries to persuade us that “the end justifies the means.”

ii. Nothing is too small to be an instrument of temptation; he began with a piece of bread.

iii. Nothing is too great for him to offer; he ended by the offer of a kingdom.

Affections.—Realize the power, perseverance, and craft of the Tempter; pray for light to detect him under all his various disguises; resolve to resist small temptations.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN, I.

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying. Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."—S. Matt., xv, 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mother interceding with our LORD for her daughter.

PRELUDE II. Pray that you may be earnest and persevering in the duty of intercession.

I. Consider how this miracle teaches the duty of Intercession.

i. The woman represents the Church of the Gentiles, and when, more than in Lent, does she come beseeching our LORD for her child.

ii. And who is this daughter? but each of those many children of the Church, who, overcome in the great fight with Satan, are indeed grievously vexed by the devil.

iii. Yes, we may see here the Church in Lent pleading for the conversion of sinners, following along the way as He goes up to His Passion, and crying out for her children, for some who are too grievously vexed by the devil to pray for themselves; the difficulty she met with, teaches us the need of perseverance in Intercession.

II. Consider the duty of Intercession.

i. Its dignity: It is a participation in the very work of CHRIST on His mediatorial throne. He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should suffer with Him, calling us to a fellowship in His sufferings; and he ever liveth to make intercession for us, and in this work we are called to have our share; oh, when we weary of it, think of His words, "*Could ye not watch with me one hour?*"

ii. Its importance: It is the necessary outcome of Christian Charity, and without it the work of the Church cannot go on with power and efficacy.

iii. It brings its blessing on those who intercede, for "*with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*"; and its neglect is spoken of as sin.—(I. Sam., xii., 23.)

III. Consider that Lent is a special call to Intercession.

i. We see in the Passion the effects of *all* sin, therefore we need to sorrow for the sins of those who sorrow not themselves; they are members of the same Body of Christ, though cut off by sin; we must sorrow because we love CHRIST, and desire to make reparation for their ingratitude; because we love them, and desire to bring them back to their LORD.

ii. To how many will this Lent be the last call! the last day of grace! Before next Lent, they will be dead, perhaps in body, or, if not, in soul, hardened into final impenitence; as our LORD wept over Jerusalem on Palm-Sunday, because He knew it was the last call of the doomed city, so should we lament over and intercede for those who are, like Jerusalem, rejecting the calls of GOD, living in sin or without GOD.

iii. Make therefore some definite rules about time to be devoted to intercession, and the different classes or individuals you will pray for, this Lent.

Affections.—Realize how many souls are vexed by the devil, and so especially needing your prayers; pray that you may pray for others, at least as earnestly as you pray for yourselves, uniting your prayers with the continual intercession of our LORD; resolve to devote some definite time every week, or every day, during Lent, to this duty.

SECOND MONDAY IN LENT.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN, II.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—S. Matt., xv., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the tenderness and love with which our LORD looked upon this woman, as He praised and rewarded her faith.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may imitate some of her virtues.

Consider some of the virtues of this woman's character, which are manifested in her supplication of our LORD.

I. Her faith:

i. She believes He *can* heal her daughter; the Leper had believed in our LORD's power.—(S. Matt., viii., 2.)

ii. She believes He *will* heal her, although thrice repulsed; in this she stands alone in the Gospel.

iii. After the second repulse, she does not pray Him to heal her daughter, but only to *help* her, as seemed to Him best; and she adds to her *prayer, worship*, an act of faith, and love.

iv. She accepts His answer, strange as it seems, as the right one, the one she wants.

II. Her Hope: She left her country, came out of the coasts of Canaan, in the hope that He would heal her daughter. There is nothing worthy to be the object of our hopes in this world; we must set all our hopes on things beyond the grave, that when we leave our country, to go to JESUS, our hopes may be realized. Prayer is now the exercise of Hope.

III. Her Charity:

i. She shows her love for our LORD by *worshipping* Him, for worship is the exercise of love.

ii. She shows her love for her daughter by the journey she takes, and the severe trial she undergoes.

iii. So entirely does she make her daughter's misery her own, that she says, "*Have mercy on me,*" "*Lord help me.*"

IV. Her Humility: "*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*"—v. 26.

i. She accepts the title, dogs.

ii. She thankfully accepts the second place, after the children.

V. Her patient perseverance; the crowning virtue of spiritual life:

i. She perseveres after three repulses, perseveres to the end.

ii. She bears all without complaining.

Affections.—Examine how far these virtues are practiced by you; pray for each of them; resolve to do some act which may give you an opportunity to exercise them.

SECOND TUESDAY IN LENT.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ACTORS IN THE PASSION.—S. PETER.

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.....And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."—S. Luke, xxii., 61-62.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Peter in the house of Caiaphas.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for distrust of self, and perfect trust in God.

S. Peter is a typical character, the great example of the sanguine temperament, in its strength, and in its weakness.

I. Consider the bright side of S. Peter's character:

i. Impassible, impulsive, hopeful; with great powers of adaptation; quick to grasp a position; ready, and eager to sympathize; ready in speaking, and acting; not obstinate, although self-willed; with great power of throwing off burdens, and of rising again after defeat.

ii. On the bright side, it is the happiest and most generally loveable character, and with the greatest power of general influence, from its broad sympathy; a brilliant rather than a deep character.

II. Consider the dark side of S. Peter's character:

i. Its amiability renders it liable to be easily turned from its purpose, its complaisance, to the suspicion of being wanting in principle; it is wanting in persistency, expending all its strength on the first impulse; it takes up new schemes without counting the cost; its root-sin is Self-Confidence and Pride.

ii. Its worst trait is its untruthfulness; its impulsiveness precipitates it into positions, which it is neither inclined, nor, in fact, able to maintain; and hence come shufflings, evasions, devices, which are almost downright falsehood, and which produce an impression of untrustworthiness; this is the saddest feature of a character, which has otherwise much that is good, generous and beautiful.

III. Consider how both sides of S. Peter's character are manifested in the Passion:

i. The bright side:

(a.) His generous promise: "*Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.*"—S. Matt., xxvi., 35.

(b.) His brave attack on Malchus, who may have been the leader of the band (for the Greek in each of the accounts is not a servant of the high priest, but the servant).

(c.) The quickness of his repentance; one look of our LORD was enough to make him go out and weep bitterly.

ii. The dark side:

(a.) The self-confidence which led him to venture among his Master's enemies.

(b.) The influence of the company, in which he was, leading him to desire to conceal his true feelings.

(c.) When asked the unwelcome question, first shuffling and evasion, "*I know not what Thou sayest*"—S. Matt., xxvi., 70; then actual denial of CHRIST, "*I do not know the man*"—v. 72; then, deeper sin, "*began he to curse and to swear*"—v. 74.

IV. Consider some lessons from our LORD's treatment of S. Peter:

i. Our LORD sets before S. Peter the difficulties of the way, foretells falls, and allows him to fall, that he may learn his weakness and be humbled.

ii. Self-confidence and pride, his besetting sin, was as great as that of Judas. Our LORD uses nearly the same words in His rebuke of S. Peter as in speaking of Judas: "*Get thee behind me, Satan*"—S. Matt. xvi., 23; "*one of you is a devil*"—S. John vi., 70.

iii. Be not too sure of first impressions; count the cost—not to decline it, but to enter on it prepared for the worst. Beware of self-confidence and spiritual pride; distrust yourself, and have recourse to prayer and the Sacraments; do not be desponding at falls—they are necessary to conquer self; and the Hand is always ready to save you when sinking.

Affections.—Humility, and fear; pray for self-knowledge and spiritual strength; resolve to be watchful against pride.

THIRD WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, III.—AGAINST ENVY.

"Woman, behold thy son!.....Behold thy mother!"—S. John, xix., 26-27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, in His hours of pain, unselfishly providing for those He loved.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good LORD deliver me.

These words are recorded only by the Apostle of Love, as exhibiting the true law of love, and witnessing against its breach in the sin of envy.

I. Consider the sin of Envy, or Jealousy:

- i. It is essentially Selfishness; it makes self-gratification the motive of its own actions, and the criterion by which it judges the actions of others.
- ii. It clings to the exclusive possession of persons and things, and will not share them with others.
- iii. It is the great element of disunion, and obstacle to the growth of Christian love; it is aroused, if others are drawn together; and regards only self-love in its attachments.

II. Consider our LORD's witness against this sin:

- i. On His death-bed of suffering, His unselfish thought for the happiness of others: He gives up His Mother and His friend—those He loves—and, in giving them up, unites them together in a new relationship.
- ii. JESUS, in giving up the Mother He loved, witnesses against that spirit of jealousy in family life which makes home miserable.
- iii. JESUS, in giving up His friend, witnesses against jealousy in friendship. There is only one real bond of friendship—which will always last—the common bond of the love of JESUS: there can be no envy there.

III. Consider our LORD'S Words to His Mother, as teaching the duty of true filial love: Twice He had spoken almost with rebuke to that dear Mother:

- i. When she lost Him for three days; *"Here is it that ye sought Me! Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—S. Luke, ii., 49.* He was preparing her for the time when He should be out of her sight;—for those three days, when she should seek Him sorrowing, while He should be away doing His Father's business, in Paradise, and when she should find Him again in the Spiritual Temple of the Catholic Church.
- ii. Again at the Marriage at Cana; *"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,"—S. John, ii., 4.* There He had to manifest His Divinity, and human love had to give place to duty; but when the hour was come, in His human sorrow on the Cross, He would recognize His Human Mother, and fulfil His duty as a Son.
- iii. A great lesson here on one of the most difficult duties of the present day—duty to parents in religious matters; when the religious convictions of the child conflict with the views of the parent—our LORD seems to say to His Mother, I cannot stay at home always; I must do these things; and yet He never lost His tender love for His Mother, and manifested it at the last. We must obey God's call, our Heavenly Father first, even if it bring pain on the earthly parents we love; but we must try to be very tender and considerate to them, and to show them that there is no lack of love and respect.

Affections—Realize that all these relationships are destroyed by envy; examine yourself on this sin, remembering that as Pride led to the first sin, Envy led to the first murder, that of Abel; to the greatest murder, that of JESUS; pray for a spirit of charity, and resolve to give up to others any one of whom you are jealous.

THIRD THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, III.—MOSES.

"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."—Exodus, ii., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the banks of the Nile, and the finding of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, the giving him to his mother to nurse, with these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace ever to nurse our LORD in Communion in your heart.

Moses is a type of CHRIST, especially in His childhood, and in the Blessed Sacrament,—for He fed the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness with Manna, the heavenly Bread.

I. Consider these words *"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages"* :

i. As the Eternal Father's charge to the world on the first Christmas-Day. How did the world nurse the Child? *"There was no room for them in the inn."* How did the world fulfil the charge?—by providing the Child with two cradles, a manger and a cross.

ii. As the Father's charge to the Christian world now in regard to the Blessed Sacrament—as spoken to every one. How is it fulfilled? is it much better? in how many millions of hearts there is no room for JESUS in the Blessed Sacrament!

iii. As addressed to you by the Father in every Communion,—as you kneel at the Altar, hear these words said to you when the Blessed Sacrament is laid in your hands.

II. Consider your heart as the House, in which the Holy Child is to be nursed; your Preparation, Communion, and Thanksgiving :

i. How must you prepare for Him? by cleansing the House of all else, it must be *"empty, swept, and garnished"*—S. Matt., xii., 44; swept in self-examination, emptied by Confession, garnished by the grace given in Absolution; but you must not leave it so, lest the evil spirit come back, and find it empty, and enter again, and your last state be worse than your first. No, you must go on to adorn it with the jewels of the Christian graces, like the Shunammite, when she prepared the little chamber on the wall for Elisha, it was not empty, but furnished ready for his reception—a bed, a table, a stool, a candlestick. (II. Kings, iv., 10.)

ii. Your Communion :

Go humbly, and yet boldly, and accept the charge—*"Take this Child away and nurse It for Me."* When we think how often in the past we have accepted the charge, and yet neglected the Holy Child, thought so little more of Him after our Communion, we might well fear to come to our Communion, fear to accept the charge to nurse the Child,—and yet we must come, and we must accept the charge; for, if we do not, we, individually, shall be in as sad a state as the world would have been if JESUS had never come into it to redeem it. And then we may remember He is very long-suffering, and very loving, and forgiving. He prayed to the Father to forgive those who crucified Him the first time, and He will forgive us, when we crucify Him afresh by yielding to sin after our Communion, if we repent and return to Him, for are we not His brethren? and has he not said, when asked how often a brother shall be forgiven, *"I say not until seven times, but until seventy times seven"*?

iii. Your Thanksgiving :

"I will give thee thy wages." What are the wages of all Communicants who have nursed the Child? To those who have been unworthy, unloving Communicants, the reward will be given in the last day, that *"they shall look on Him Whom THEY pierced,"* Whom they crucified; and that look shall pierce them to the heart, and that voice will say, *"Depart from Me."* But to those who have done their best, who have loved and cared for the Child, who have received the "Seed of the Woman," the "Word made Flesh," into "honest and good ground," ground ploughed up by many a true act of penitence, watered by many an earnest prayer; to these the wages will be eternal life; to dwell with the Child, Whom they loved on earth, when, like Moses, He is the Head of His people—in heaven.

Affections.—Desire that the LORD may bless you because of the Child; pray that you may learn to love Him more and more; resolve never to injure Him by sin, or to neglect Him by carelessness; pray that your wages may be eternal life.

THIRD FRIDAY IN LENT.

THE CROSS THE MIRROR OF THE CHRISTIAN.

"If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—S. James, I., 23-26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a Crucifix.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be so conformed to the image of JESUS crucified, now, that you may be transformed to the image of JESUS glorified, hereafter. (Rom., viii., 29; II. Cor., iii., 18.)

I. Consider that the end of the natural life is Crucifixion:

i. Our LORD, as a Child, took up His Cross, and carried it through life till He reached Calvary, and then laid it down, and laid Himself on it, and stretched out His Hands to receive the nails. The end of His natural life was indeed Crucifixion.

ii. The end of the natural life in us must in all points be the same, a continual Cross-bearing, being led up from Bethlehem, the House of Bread (our first Communion), through the wilderness, to the Cross. We cannot live the supernatural, *i. e.*, the Resurrection life, until Crucifixion has ended the life of nature.

iii. And this Crucifixion is the perfect law of liberty, to be crucified to the world, and so to be free from it; and more, to be crucified to self, and so free from self.

II. Consider the Crucifix as the mirror of the Christian:

i. The world would have us look on a crucifix as the mere representation of an historical event which took place eighteen hundred years ago. How one-sided a view! It is the picture of what must be going on in every one of us *now*, if we are CHRIST'S. It is the mirror in which we may see reflected what we ought to be.

ii. The means to this end: to stretch forth our hands on the Cross, and wait for the nails; the blows come but slowly, and each blow, while it adds to the pain, is a means to the end, for it fastens us more firmly to the Cross; but we *must* stretch out our hands on *the* Cross; if the nails are struck through our hands but into vacancy, and not into the Cross, woe to us, for we bleed to death *in vain*; the blows are the sorrows, pains, mortifications of life.

iii. How long must we live this crucified life?—till our pulses have ceased to beat; till, like JESUS, we have given up all to GOD; so nailed to the Cross that, like JESUS, we cannot come down, till our friends take us down, to lay us, like JESUS, in the grave.

III. Consider S. James's words (I., 23-26):

i. How often we look at ourselves in the Crucifix, and go *our* way, and forget what manner of men we resolved to be. (The Greek is, literally, "He contemplated himself and *has departed*, and immediately forgot what sort of man he was.") Observe the peculiar force of the perfect between the two aorists, bringing out that, while the looking into the mirror and the forgetting were simply acts, the departure from the mirror was a permanent state.)

ii. "*Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein.*" (The Greek is, "But he who looked into the perfect law of liberty, and *remained*:" *i. e.*, did not depart.) This is not merely looking at the Crucifix, but remaining crucified, acting out the crucifixion in our life.

iii. Remember this is the *end*, not the beginning of the natural life; many a weary day of Cross-bearing before the Cross bears you. JESUS fell under His Cross; so you may fall many times before you reach the end, and you are crucified (Gal., vi., 14-17) and beyond the reach of trouble, because you have attained to the perfect law of liberty.

Affections.—Realize that all sorrows help to the true end of Christian life; pray that you may remember what manner of man you ought to be; resolve to look often into the mirror of the Cross.

THIRD SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, III.—THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

"If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—S. Matt., iv., 3-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Eve gazing on the forbidden fruit.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to flee at once every temptation of the flesh.

I. Consider the temptation of the Flesh :

i. The type, Eve ; she first noticed that the tree was good for food ; the temptation of the flesh in some of its many forms of sloth, luxury, self-indulgence, &c., is generally the first that has to be met and conquered.

ii. It was to neglect the duty of self-denial ; our LORD at once brings forward the superior importance of the soul, "*Man shall not live by bread alone ;*" the body is to be cared for, but after the soul ; the danger of the present day is that men *will* try to live by bread *alone*.

iii. It was to distrust GOD, and to supply His need by unlawful means ; thus some steal, or cheat, or live lives of sin, under the excuse that they do it for a livelihood. Our LORD shows that GOD is not tied to means, and that, however great our need, we must trust GOD.

II. Consider the contrast between the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Evil Spirit :

i. The Holy Spirit leads us up to the contemplation of heavenly things, and to spiritual exercises ; *e. g.*, meditation, and fasting, &c.

ii. The devil tries to cast us *down* by obtruding earthly things, under the plea that they are necessary, *e. g.*, bread ; and to persuade us not to wait for GOD, but to help ourselves.

iii. How many stones become stumbling blocks to us, in our efforts to turn them into bread.

III. Consider the way our LORD meets this temptation :

i. He does not discuss matters, but at once resists ; this is a good rule in every temptation, but especially in the temptation of the flesh.

ii. He uses the words of Holy Scripture ; the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God ; Ejaculatory prayer is the best weapon against Satan.

iii. "*By every word of God.*" He shews that meditation on the Holy Scriptures, and the use of the Sacraments, are the food of the soul, which ought to be thought of before the claims of the body.

Affections.—Realize the dangers which come from our own natural appetites ; pray for a spirit of self-restraint ; resolve on some definite act of fasting or self-denial.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE STRONG MAN'S PALACE.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."—S. Luke, xi., 21, 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the self-satisfied repose of a worldly soul

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be freed from all captivity to Satan.

I. Consider the strong man—the devil (in the Greek the article needs to be translated *the* strong man—*i. e.*, Satan—not any strong man):

i. His strength: Perhaps the highest created intellect, possessed of immense forces of every kind, and, until conquered by CHRIST, *the* strong man of this world.

ii. His arms: Every art and cunning, using as the instruments of his warfare every creature.

iii. His goods: The souls of men; his by might, not by right; his by possession.

II. Consider his palace (the Greek is *αὐλή*):

i. It is the world of which he is the prince.

ii. It is also that miniature world, the soul of man.

iii. The condition of peace is produced by his lulling into false security the consciences of his captives, and so inducing a state of self-satisfied repose.

III. Consider the Stronger man, our Lord:

i. *ὁ ἰσχυρότερος*. This was the very title given to our LORD by S. John Baptist: "HE THAT IS MIGHTIER." (S. Luke, iii, 16.)

ii. In the palace (*αὐλή*) of Caiaphas our LORD met the strong man; by His Passion He overcame him; by His Resurrection He took from him the armour wherein he trusted; and spoiled his goods as he brought forth the prisoners of hope and redeemed all souls from his bondage.

iii. In the case of the individual soul the same is done, when, by the application of the Precious Blood, Satan is driven forth from the palace he called his own.

Affections.—Realize the danger of that condition of peace which comes from worldly repose; pray that you may never be at peace with the strong man, but in the might of the Stronger may overcome him; resolve by an act of penitence to free yourself from him.

THIRD MONDAY IN LENT.

THE DANGER OF REACTION.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."—S. Luke, xi., 24-26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the soul in this condition inviting the return of Satan.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never leave your soul empty, but that it may always be filled by our LORD's Presence.

This is a warning, not to the impenitent sinner, but to those who have turned to GOD, and by true penitence have been freed from their sins; a warning of a special danger after each great and successful effort in the life of penitence, the danger of Reaction.

I. Consider the condition of the evil spirit :

i. In the heart of man, at rest ; the strong man armed keeping his palace, his goods at peace.

ii. When expelled from man's heart, walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none.

iii. His intense eagerness to regain possession of his house, both on account of his unrest, and from the inviting condition in which the house is.

II. Consider the condition of man's heart after the devil's expulsion :

i. It has been swept, by most searching self-examination.

ii. It has been emptied (S. Matt., xii., 44), by the pouring out of all the sins discovered in humble confession.

iii. It has been garnished by the grace of Absolution.

III. Consider the danger of this condition :

i. The struggle of penitence produces a feeling of fatigue, which may be mistaken for peace, and an inclination to rest awhile ; leaving the house, alas, *empty* ; that was the fault. The enemy is outside the fortress, it is true, but he will besiege it for a long time, and to leave it ungarrisoned is to leave it at his mercy.

ii. The result of re-admitting the devil is that he brings with him a seven-fold force, that he may have a stronger hold than ever on the heart.

iii. The safe-guard is :

(a.) At once to fill the cleansed heart with JESUS in Holy Communion, with the Holy Ghost, with the love of GOD.

(b.) To watch against re-action ; *i. e.*, the attacks of the Tempter.

(c.) Again and again to sweep, empty, and garnish the house.

Affections.—Realize the danger of resting after a first effort ; pray that you may not be re-conquered by Satan ; resolve to keep a regular watch, often sweeping your heart, and, when necessary, emptying and garnishing it.

THIRD TUESDAY IN LENT.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ACTORS IN THE PASSION.—CAIAPHAS.

"If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all: nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."—S. Jbhn, xi., 48-50.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Caiaphas, in the council, giving this advice.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that truth, and not expediency, may be the rule of your religious life.

We have not the same amount of data, from which to construct the character of Caiaphas, as of the other actors in the Passion; but to pass him over would be to lose a large link in the chain of evil which surrounded our Blessed LORD; and there are certainly three traits which stand out very strongly in his relation to our LORD'S Passion. He was a weaker reflection of Annas, and a fair type of the priestly sect among the Jews.

I. Consider his ruling passion in life; Avarice:

i. Contemporary history tells us that avarice was the especial characteristic of the whole family of Annas, who had founded the famous four shops under the twin cedars of Lebanon, in which things for sacrifice were sold, and by having the monopoly, they had raised the price even of doves to a gold coin apiece; and these shops, which they had intruded under the Temple porticoes, were managed for their profit.

ii. The striking change which took place in the relation of the Sadducees, of which Caiaphas was the representative, toward our LORD, in His Ministry, and in the closing scenes of His life, was probably greatly due to His Cleansing of the Temple; as long as our LORD denounced the Pharisees and oral tradition, Caiaphas probably regarded Him rather as an ally, but when He began to interfere with their illicit gains, their avarice was touched, and their bitter malice aroused.

iii. Avarice had a large share in our LORD'S Passion. It was the moving power in Judas and Caiaphas; has it ever influenced you in your relation to CHRIST? Have you ever, when your worldly and religious interests clashed, in small things, acted like Judas or Caiaphas?

II. Consider his ruling idea in religion; Expediency:

i. His relation to the Romans, under whose patronage he held office, shows that he regarded religion chiefly as a means of social position, and worldly prosperity.

ii. His prophecy (S. John, xi., 48-50) shows he was not guided in his views by truth, but by policy; it was not what was right, but what was expedient; and expedient, too, not for the religious life of the people, but for their political relation to the great world-power at Rome.

iii. In the great religious questions of the day, and in the difficulties of your own soul's life, have you been influenced simply by truth or by expediency? remember expediency delivered Jesus to be crucified.

III. Consider his ruling principle in action; Unscrupulosity:

i. In the advice he gave, that one man should die for the people.

ii. In the means by which he accomplished his ends, first the employment of a traitor, Judas; then the attempted use of false-witnesses, and finally his own conduct in procuring the condemnation of our LORD.

iii. In arguments or plans of action, have you ever carried your end by unfair means?

Affections.—Make an act of self-oblation as against temptation to avarice; pray that you may know the truth, whatever that knowledge may cost you; resolve to be very upright and just in all your dealings in life.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, IV.—AGAINST LUST.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—S. Matt., xxvii., 46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the change around the Cross, the thick darkness stealing across the sky, and shutting out the brightness of the noonday sun; the people moving about the streets of Jerusalem, the priests preparing the sacrifices, all stopped in their work; and through the darkness the bitter cry sounding from the agonized sufferer on the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of purity.

I. Consider the sin of Lust:

- i. It is the sin which has done so much to wreck all that is fairest in human nature, and which has been the cause of so many other sins.
- ii. It is the body, which is the Temple of God, rejoicing in its own degradation.
- iii. It is closely connected with pride; the devils who fell through pride are constantly represented as unclean spirits; and its result is very often unbelief.

II. Consider our LORD'S witness against this sin:

- i. His whole Passion was a great protest against it; His most pure Body, torn by nails, and thorns, and scourges, to expiate my sins of self-indulgence! Can I believe in JESUS, love JESUS, and yet crucify Him thus?
- ii. The darkness was typical of those clouds of moral darkness with which impurity surrounds the soul, shutting out the sight of God. *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*—S. Matt., v., 8.
- iii. The cry of dereliction; yes, this is the sin which drives God away; strip yourself of all that may tempt you, things inexpedient, as well as things unlawful; better to be forsaken by all else, than to be forsaken by God. Do not go to the edge of the precipice of this sin, when JESUS, in the very climax of His Passion, witnesses, with His dying Words, and tortured Body, against it. Give up pleasant society, anything that may prove a temptation; and in the hour of your passion hear these words of JESUS, ringing in your ears.

III. Consider the meaning of this cry of dereliction; it is better left in mystery, but this we may note:

- i. Never for one moment was there any separation of the Hypostatic Union.
- ii. JESUS speaks as the Representative of Mankind; He says "My God," not "My Father"; it is the agony of being separated, even for a moment, from the light of the consciousness of His Father's Presence, in which He had lived as Man; it was our LORD'S witness of the horror of that which sits so lightly on us, the hiding of God's Face from us by the clouds of sin.
- iii. JESUS forsaken; and there are times when on our Cross we must feel forsaken, and cry these words; to unite ourselves then with the dereliction of JESUS on the Cross must be our comfort. JESUS forsaken, desolate, deserted for you. And you, what will you do? Will you ever desert Him?

Affections.—Realize the hatefulness of this sin in God's sight; examine whether, in thought, word, or deed, you have yielded to it; pray for grace and strength to resist; resolve to cleanse the eye of your soul by true penitence.

FOURTH THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, IV.—JAEI.

"For there was peace between Jabin King of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite."—Judges, iv. 17. (Read, also, vv., 17-23)

PRELUDE I.—Picture Sisera, carefully covered with the mantle, and sleeping safely in the tent, while Jael keeps watch at the door to prevent his foes from entering in to disturb him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may watch faithfully the door of your heart, that no sin may enter in; and that our LORD may reign in undisturbed possession of it.

Sisera is a type of our LORD in the Blessed Sacrament, seeking admission into the hearts of faithful Communicants.

I. Consider what a wonderfully true type of a Communicant Jael is:

i. She goes out to meet Him, as we do, when we go to Celebration. She says, Turn in, my LORD, turn in to me, fear not. How often we say this when we make our Communions! Fear not, my LORD, I will be true to Thee this time, I will not neglect Thee.

ii. And then, after our Communion, we begin so well; we begin by giving Him our best, and our LORD repose in our hearts as in her tent, and we cover Him with the mantle of good resolves. He is thirsty. Ah! He thirsts for our souls. Do we bring Him, and give Him *our best*—ourselves? not merely water, but milk?

iii. And then we go and stand in the tent-door, determined to watch against our besetting sin, and we stand and watch at the door of our heart for awhile, and He sleeps on peacefully; but at last a temptation comes!—some old one presents itself in a new form, and we forget our resolve, and yield. What have we done? Alas! we have taken the hammer and nail, and treacherously crucified our LORD afresh. Does not wilful sin after Communion explain, more than anything, that dreadful text, "*They crucify the Son of God afresh.*" So he dies, as far as that Communion is concerned; He would have slept on in our heart, continually supplying us with grace, but we have opened that heart to his foes. How often has this been the end of your Communions?

II. Consider our Preparation, Communion, and Thanksgiving:

i. Preparation: "*For there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the House of Heber the Kenite.*" The best preparation is always to be sure that there is peace between our LORD and us, before we invite Him to enter our hearts. We dare not come with one mortal sin unrepented of, unabsolved. "*He maketh peace within thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.*" How does He make this peace within us? By Absolution. Let us ask ourselves whether we have always fulfilled all the conditions of peace—whether we have had all the right dispositions for a good Confession.

ii. Communion: Go to meet Him; say, turn in, my LORD—fear not; promise Him that you will stand at the tent-door and watch; watch, not only against foes from without, but also against evil suggestions from within.

iii. Thanksgiving: Wait upon your Divine Guest; give Him your heart—He asks for that; thank Him for His condescension in having chosen your heart for a refuge. "*Blessed shall Jael be above women.*" Oh, how blessed, because He dwells with you! When our LORD is fast asleep, apparently, and you are therefore enduring coldness in devotion, then watch lest you betray Him.

Affections.—Pray that you may never crucify CHRIST afresh by bad Communions, or wilful sin after Communion; resolve that you will often go to meet Him, for He is ever seeking a resting-place; resolve to watch, especially against your besetting sin.

FOURTH FRIDAY IN LENT

THE CROSS THE LIFE-BOAT IN THE STORM.

"Therefore do men commit their lives to a small piece of wood, and passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved.....For blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh."—Wisdom, xiv., 5 and 7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a life-boat in a storm.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may trust more to the Cross.

I. Consider the sea :

i. The sea of GOD's Providence; the mighty ocean of GOD's will; are you content to rest, like a piece of wood on the waves, and to be washed wherever GOD wills? You know not what may be that will for you in the future, but this one thing you do know, that *"this is the will of God, even your sanctification"*—I. Thess., iv., 3; what a bosom to rest on, amid the storms of life, the bosom of that resistless ocean, the will of GOD!

ii. The sea of the world; a treacherous sea indeed, over which every life has to pass, and how many are swallowed up by it?

iii. It is a rough sea; the Providence of GOD is the *narrow* way; the sea of the world is rough and stormy, or worse, a deceitful calm; thank GOD if for you the sea is rough.

II. Consider the small piece of wood, the weak vessel, as the Cross :

i. *"Small"*: And yet the cross was not small to JESUS, for He fell under it thrice, and in His Agony prayed that, if it were possible, it might be taken away; your crosses, small though they seem to the world's eye, are big enough for you, chosen for you by CHRIST; they are each a small piece of *that wood* which He carried.

ii. A *"weak vessel"*: But *"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."* *"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*—I. Cor., i., 27 and 18.

iii. *"Blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh"*: This referred to the Ark in the past, to the Cross in the future; the wood of the Cross, blessed by the touch of CHRIST, that every cross might be blessed to him who bears it.

III. Consider the Life-boat in the Storm:

i. Compare a great ship with a life-boat; which appears the safest, which is? In the storm the great ship is wrecked, but the life-boat is safe; the surges dash against it in vain, for it rides over them. The great ship represents the world's great schemes for humanity's improvement; the life-boat, the cross GOD means for humanity's salvation.

ii. Men commit their lives to the life-boat; but alas, not till the storm comes, and they realize that the ship must perish; we must recognize that the world is perishing, in order that we may commit ourselves entirely to the Cross.

iii. They are saved; yes, for through all the changing storms the Cross rides safe. *"Crux stat dum volvitur orbis."*

Affections.—Realize the certain shipwreck of all the world's schemes; pray that you may float nailed to the Cross through all life's storms; resolve to bear well small crosses.

FOURTH SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, IV.—THE SECOND TEMPTATION.

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."—S. Matt., iv., 5-8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD setting a little child in the midst of His disciples and saying, "*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*"—S. Matt., xviii., 2-4.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of childlike humility.

I. Consider the temptation of the devil; the temptation of the mind to spiritual sins, especially of pride:

i. The type, Eve: She observed that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.

ii. It was to neglect the exercise of humility, the foundation virtue of Christian life: Our LORD was practicing self-denial, and the devil tempted Him not to fast; He was in humiliation, and the devil tempted Him to pride.

iii. It was to presumption: Satan, as it were, said: You have done well in showing Your trust in God by not making the stones bread; now prove how perfect is that trust, by casting Yourself down from the pinnacle of the Temple.

II. Consider some varieties of the sin of pride: It is the root-sin of all,—the sin which caused the fall of the angels:

i. Spiritual pride: Where? In the Holy City, on a pinnacle of the Temple. This often comes to us in Church, at our devotions;—let us beware, this Lent, lest, in resisting the temptations of the world and the flesh, we fall into spiritual pride, perhaps at the very humility and obedience with which we have kept Lent.

ii. Intellectual pride: Causing the very means by which we might rise to a higher knowledge of God to become a cloud hiding God from our sight.

iii. Personal pride: At natural gifts, real or supposed; and yet, what have we that we have not received?

III. Consider Satan's appeal to Scripture:

i. He distorts the sense: CHRIST needed not angelic hands to sustain Him, and so this text refers to His people.

ii. He omits what does not suit his purpose: "*to keep Thee in all Thy ways*"—Ps., xci., 11; *i. e.*, in the ways of God's commandments, not in breaking those commandments. The Psalm is a description of what God will do for those who trust in Him, not for those who tempt Him.

iii. He omits what refers to himself: "*Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young Lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet*"—v. 13.

IV. Consider our LORD's answer: "*It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*"

i. There is no discussion: He simply brings forward a Scripture command.

ii. He exposes the true nature of the deed, removing the guilt: It is not an act of faith, but of presumption. Temptations, recognized in their true light, are half conquered.

iii. Some ways in which we tempt God: By not avoiding occasions of sin; by putting off Repentance; by stifling Conscience; by engaging thoughtlessly in prayer; by neglecting appointed means of grace, for those of our own choosing.

Affections.—Realize the dignity of a true servant of God, on whom angels wait; pray to be delivered from spiritual pride; resolve to make, this Lent, some special acts of humility.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

ESCA VIATORUM.

"When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him."—S. John, vi., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the fainting people coming to our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, Give us this day our daily bread.

I. Consider the scene as a type of our experiences now :

i. The wilderness is the world, a wilderness indeed !

ii. In the other similar miracle, we read that our LORD said, "*If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way.*"—S. Mark, viii., 3. (In the Greek it is, "*to their own HOUSE.*") Our own House, to which JESUS sends us, is that House "*not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*"

iii. How many faint by the way ; the House is ready, but they never reach it.

II. Consider the Food : "*From whence can a man SATISFY these men with bread here in the wilderness ?*"—S. Mark, viii., 4.

i. It is the question of life ; how many attempts the world makes to answer it ; with how many things does she try in vain to *satisfy* the hungry soul, with pleasure, popularity, sin, with intellectual theories ; she has no food for the soul, and man cannot live by bread alone.

ii. The Church has answered it, as JESUS answered it ; from the five loaves and two fishes, which He has blessed and given to His ministers to distribute to His people ; the Sacramental gifts of the Church ; and chiefly the Holy Eucharist, the wayfarer's Bread ; that alone can satisfy the soul here in the wilderness of the world.

iii. There was a special character in those who were fed, they were abiding with JESUS in the wilderness, fasting from the food of the body, that they might be filled with the Word of GOD.

III. Consider the law of this heavenly feeding :

i. "*Give ye them to eat.*"—S. Mark, vi., 37. The Church is the Dispenser of the Sacraments ; others may feed with earthly bread, she alone can give that Bread of Life, which has been entrusted to her.

ii. "*He commanded them to make all sit down by companies . . . and they sat down in ranks.*"—S. Mark, vi., 39-40. The law of order observed, those who desire to be fed must take their place.

iii. "*He sent away the people.*"—S. Mark, vi., 45. The Ministers may feed the people, JESUS alone can send them away with the blessing received or forfeited.

Affections.—Realize the famine of the world ; pray for the pilgrim's Bread ; resolve to seek it where alone it may be had.

FOURTH MONDAY IN LENT.

THE SIN OF WASTE.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—S. John, vi., 12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Disciples carefully gathering up the fragments.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not be accused of wasting your LORD's goods.

I. Consider these words as our LORD's sermon against the sin of waste :

i. He is the Rich man of the parable of the unjust steward (S. Luke, xvi.) ; you are the steward.

ii. The occasion : He spake these words just after showing, by His miracle, how independent He was of means, how abundant were the riches of His power.

iii. Why ? To warn us against waste, even where there seems a superabundance.

II. Consider some of the things we most commonly waste :

i. Time : That little space between two eternities, given us in which to accomplish a certain definite work.

ii. Life : That ONE life ! which is so precious, which, if wasted, can never be recovered, for we cannot live another life.

iii. Talents, faculties, opportunities, all the goods of heaven ; if we waste them here, we cannot have them hereafter.

III. Consider the extreme minuteness of our LORD's injunction : "*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*"

i. The fragments of time ; the spare minutes ; remember they are fragments too of eternity ; how do you waste them ? by what habit of gossiping, or day-dreaming, or sloth ?

ii. The fragment of life that remains, there may be for each of us but a small fragment left, and if that is lost, all may be lost !

iii. "*That nothing be lost*" ; we run the risk of losing *all*, while our LORD commands us to lose *nothing*,

Affections.—Realize the effect of the sin of waste in your life ; pray for diligence ; resolve to conquer some habit by which you waste.

FOURTH TUESDAY IN LENT.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ACTORS IN THE PASSION.—HEROD.

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; but He answered him nothing."—S. Luke, xxiii., 8-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing silent in the presence of Herod.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not neglect God's calls to penitence.

Herod is brought prominently before us in two great sins—the beheading of S. John Baptist, and the mock trial of our LORD; and we have abundance of material out of which to draw his character. He is the great example of a weak man, with good impulses, under the double slavery of a sensual sin, and a bold, intriguing, resolute, bad woman; Herodias is, too, a typical character. Woman in the demoniac grandeur of wickedness; they are the anti-types of Ahab and Jezebel.

I. Consider Herod's character on its dark side:

- i. Tyrannical and unscrupulous. (S. Luke, iii., 20; xiii., 31.)
- ii. Cunning: "*Go tell that fox*"—S. Luke, xiii., 32; and these our LORD's words.
- iii. Weak: "*And the King was sorry; nevertheless for the oath's sake.*"—S. Matt., xiv., 9.
- iv. Superstitious: He thought John had risen. (S. Mark, vi., 16.)
- v. Sensual: His relations to Herodias; and in the Greek dancing of Salome.

II. Consider the good points of his character:

- i. He had religious impulses, and there was a time when he was nearly being converted. (S. Mark, vi., 20.)
- ii. He protected S. John from the malice of Herodias. (S. Mark, vi., 19.)

III. Consider some of the lessons and warnings of Herod's character:

- i. Herod allowed his religious impulses to degenerate into mere religious curiosity; Herod was exceeding glad to see JESUS; once he had trembled at the report of His miracles; now his conscience is blunted, he mocks and derides Him.
- ii. Our LORD's treatment of the sensualist; SILENCE! He had had his call from S. John Baptist, his day of grace was passed; what a solemn warning to those who, disregarding the calls of CHRIST through His Ministers and Church, yet expect to find mercy at the last from Himself.
- iii. Doing many things (S. Mark, vi., 20), but refusing to give up one darling sin; how sensual sin eats out the life of the soul.
- iv. Want of moral courage to break from the influence of a strong bad character; how often this is the cause of our sins now.
- v. The folly and weakness of making a bad oath the excuse for a worse sin.

Affections.—Realization of the responsibility of religious impulses, and warnings; pray that you may not disregard your day of grace; resolve to break entirely from every occasion of sin.

FIFTH WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, V.—AGAINST GLUTTONY.

"I thirst."—S. John, xix., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on His death-bed, in these words, revealing His physical pain.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the virtue of self-restraint.

Have you ever stood by the bedside of some fevered sufferer, breathing the last moments of life? the lips parched, the weak voice whispering, *I thirst!* There were none to minister at the death-bed of JESUS, but the rough soldiers; no soothing drink, but sour vinegar; and these words are our LORD's Sermon against Gluttony.

I. Consider the sin of Gluttony:

i. In its greatest form: By drink, how many a life has been ruined, how many a home broken up, how sad a heritage of sin handed down to children; excessive eating, too, while less dangerous in its effects, is of the same nature of sin, and a glutton is seldom good for much.

ii. In lesser ways: By Daintiness, excessive thought about food, extravagance in expensive delicacies, grumbling when food is not just what we wish, eating to excess nice things, eating things injurious to health, because pleasant.

iii. In neglect of self-denial: By not keeping the fast-days of the Church; making every trifling ailment an excuse for self-gratification in food.

II. Consider our LORD's witness against this sin:

i. *"I thirst."* It was the only confession of physical pain in all His sufferings; He spoke it to let us know, beyond all doubt, that He felt all the needs and pains to which humanity is subject. He felt the intense cravings of thirst, but He denied His appetite, tasting only the vinegar, that He might witness against, and expiate our sins of self-indulgence.

ii. By His life of fasting, and prayer, and self-denial; and especially in His two great hours of need, in His hunger after the forty days' fast in the wilderness, in His thirst on the Cross.

iii. The first Adam had fallen by yielding to this sin, and indulging his appetite; the Second Adam will regain the lost kingdom for humanity, by denying even lawful appetites.

III. Consider the spiritual thirst our LORD was expressing:

i. It was not only pains of Body that our LORD was suffering, but far more—an intense thirst of soul, and for what? for your soul, for your tears of penitence; they are the wine which can quench that infinite thirst!

ii. The greatest element in the mental sufferings of our LORD was the thought of those souls, who, knowing all His love for them, would still reject Him. Is it possible that in any way you may be among them?

iii. As our LORD, in His temptation to make the stones bread, brought forward the deeper importance of spiritual food; so now, in His Sermon against Gluttony, He reminds us of a thirst which we must have in our souls; do you feel it? an intense craving for God. (Ps. xlii. and lxiii.)

Affections.—Realize how dangerous to the soul is the excessive indulgence of the body; examine yourself on the sin of Gluttony; pray for grace to practice self-denial; make some rule about fasting for the rest of this Lent.

FIFTH THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, V.—GIDEON.

"And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along."—Judges, vii., 13. (Read, also, vi. and vii.)

PRELUDE I.—Picture Gideon's interview with the angel under the oak at Ophrah.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for reliance on, and co-operation with, divine grace.

I. Consider Gideon as a type of our LORD in His Passion, and of ourselves in our hours of trial:

i. Ophrah and Gethsemane, what a parallel! the oak and the goodlier tree, the Cross; the two wine-presses; the two threshing-floors; the two angels strengthening; the two battles to be fought and won, without numbers, or science, or earthly weapons; the two warriors, both mighty men of valour, yet on the eve of the fight shrinking with dread.

ii. And may we not here see ourselves, too; the threshing-floor of life under the tree of the Cross, where the Wine of the kingdom has to be pressed out of us; the enemy encamped around us, and we having to go against them without earthly weapons, or human strength, in the MIGHT given us. "*Go in this thy Might.*" (vi., 14)

II. Consider Gideon's encouragement:

i. He had had many signs; the fire consuming his offering; the dew on the fleece, and on the ground; but the last, which removed all hesitation, in the help of which he went forth to the boldest fight and most miraculous victory of history (for nowhere else do we read of such odds, three hundred *unarmed* men against an host "*like grasshoppers for multitude*"), was the vision of the Cake of Barley-Bread, the great type of that might in which we go forth to our conflicts, that Corn of the Mighty, the Holy Eucharist. A cake of barley-bread, which seemed to have life, and moved; so in Holy Scriptures, CHRIST is called the Living Bread that came down from heaven; Barley-Bread, the poorest sort, so CHRIST was poor and despised: "*Is not this the carpenter's son?*" Was not His family poor in Israel, and He made least in His Father's house (vi., 15), "*a little lower than the angels*"? (the Paschal wave-sheaf, too, the type of CHRIST'S risen Body, was of barley), and does He not now come under the humble forms of Bread and Wine, in outward appearance nothing, and yet, because He is there, Almighty.

ii. Why did CHRIST come? to overthrow the hosts of the Midianites and Amalekites (Satan and his hosts), who were enslaving His people; and so He comes now to each soul, in its Communion, to overthrow the tent which is pitched against it, and how many are these tents; in one dwells doubt, in another heresy, in a third unbelief, in others strong temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and what is the power that enables the soul to overthrow them, simple faith in the H. E., the Communion of that soul; how often that Bread was the strength of the martyrs!

iii. And then after the dream, the light in the pitchers; CHRIST in us will put our foes to flight, but we must be careful lest our earthly nature hides the light; the trials and disciplines of life are intended to wear down that nature, that we may become transparent; and, if we are conscious of any habit which is cloaking the light, we must break that habit like Gideon's pitchers, that the light may blaze forth in us, and put to flight our foes.

III. Consider our Preparation, Communion, and Thanksgiving:

i. Preparation: like Gideon (vi., 25), to destroy all objects of idolatry in our hearts and lives; to make a sacrifice of them, whatever be the consequence; to realize the strength of the enemy, and so to come to our Communion, seeking with faith that grace which is sufficient.

ii. Communion: "*Go in this thy might.....have not I sent thee?*" "*As thy days, so shall thy strength be.*"

iii. Thanksgiving: Thank the LORD that He is with you (vi., 12), and resolve to prove yourself a man of valour. "*The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon*": Remember that having the grace now, you must co-operate with it; the Sword of the LORD will do nothing toward slaying your foes, unless you use it; "*Let your light so shine,*" &c.

Affections.—Realize that the more helps of grace you have, the more enemies will have to be overcome; pray for distrust of self and trust in God; resolve, in the might of His grace, to attack some one sin in your life at once.

FIFTH FRIDAY IN LENT.

THE CROSS THE TOKEN OF ACCEPTANCE.

"Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men."—Ezekiel, ix., 4. (See also, Rev., vii., 3; ix., 4.)

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Sign of the Cross being made on the forehead at Baptism.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in the great scrutiny the mark of CHRIST may be found on you.

I. Consider the mark of the Cross:

i. It was made upon you in Baptism, the Covenant of acceptance, when CHRIST accepted you as His soldier, and placed on you His mark; has it been obliterated by sin, or does it still glow on your forehead in the sight of the angels?

ii. The Cross in Baptism is but the symbol of that cross which is to shine forth in your life, as the token of the fulfilment of the Covenant of Baptism; can the angels, as they gaze on your life, see in it the glow of the Cross? it must be stamped upon your hearts, burned into your life, if it is to be indelible.

II. Consider our LORD's words about the two ways: *"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*—S. Matt., vii., 13-14.

i. It is the question of questions for us, to know which way we are treading, whether we are among the sealed ones of GOD or not; how can we know? By the objects which we find on the road; in directing a person along an unknown road, we tell him the objects he will pass, that he may know whether he is keeping in the right road or not; so did CHRIST; He told us plainly the landmarks of the narrow way, the objects, by the roadside, in front, the very paving of the way, all take the same shape, the Cross.

ii. Look into your daily life; is it full of trials and mortifications? is it strait, thorny, and vexatious? is it full of crosses? if so, thank God, for these are the signs of the narrow way, these are the tokens of acceptance, the mark of the cross in your life.

III. Consider the law of acceptance: *"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."*—Heb., xii., 6.

i. The Cross then in life is the mark of GOD's love; have you ever thought it a mark of want of love?

ii. The Cross is a mark of GOD's acceptance; have you ever thought it implied rejection?

Affections.—Realize the true meaning of the crosses of your life; pray that the Cross may be so burnt into your life as to be indelible; resolve to welcome crosses more thankfully.

FIFTH SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, V.—THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

"Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."—S. Matt., iv., 8-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD gazing on the kingdoms of the world, and then refusing Satan's offer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace of detachment from creatures.

I. Consider the temptation of the World—the sin of the soul:

i. The type, Eve: she saw that the tree was pleasant to the eye.
ii. To neglect the duty of detachment from the world; CHRIST was practicing self-denial, and the devil tempted Him to break His fast; He was in humiliation, and Satan tempted Him to an act of pride; He had retired from the world into the wilderness, the devil brings the world to Him there, and offers it to Him. How true to our experience is this! if we court the world, it disappoints us; but if we leave the world, it follows us.

iii. Our LORD had come to redeem the world; the temptation was to accomplish the end by wrong means;—Satan no longer says, if Thou be the Son of God; but, as it were, says, I see Thou wilt prevail, I know Thou hast come to wrest the world from my grasp; come, I will give it up, and save all Thy Passion, and the sufferings of Thy Saints, if Thou wilt yield me *one* act of worship. So at the time of Constantine, Satan offered the Christian Church the kingdoms of the world, and the Church, alas, unmindful of Her LORD's example, accepted them, and has suffered for it ever since.

II. Consider Satan's offer:

i. The world; he displayed all its glories, but he said nothing of its emptiness and cares.

ii. He offers this world instead of the next; whatever there is of glory and beauty here is but the shadow of "*good things to come*;" Satan would have us embrace the shadow, that we may lose the substance. This was the first real offer Satan made. He tried to tempt CHRIST without offering anything, before; He is like a merchant, determined to get our souls, wishing to obtain them as cheaply as possible, but ready, if necessary, to bid high. He offered the whole world to tempt our LORD, while a handful of gold is generally sufficient to tempt us.

iii. The terms "*if Thou wilt fall down and worship me*": His temptations have all one object, the accomplishment of our fall.

III. Consider our LORD's answer:

i. "*Get thee hence, Satan.*" He showed Satan that He knew him, and at once he took to flight.

ii. He made no allusion to the offer, but passed at once to the condition, to show us that we should not allow Satan's allurements to find a moment's lodgment in our minds, but that we should at once remember the result of yielding; it is a fall, an act of worship of Satan.

iii. "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*": He here shows that GOD demands bodily reverence, that falling on the knee, which Satan asked; also He teaches that we have not only to serve GOD, but to *worship* Him.

Affections.—Realize the vanity of the glories of this world; pray for detachment; resolve this Lent to *worship* GOD.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.—PASSIONTIDE.

OUR RELATION TO THE PASSION.

"I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people."—Isaiah, lxx., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the various groups around the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be able to take your place nearest to the Cross.

Every Passiontide calls us round the Cross, and sees acted out again the great drama.

I. On the first Good-Friday the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell into five groups around the Cross; so each Good-Friday sees the whole world similarly divided. Consider where your place will be:

- i. The three women and one man at the foot of the Cross, representing those who really keep Passiontide.
- ii. The Apostles, and others who loved JESUS, afar off; those who believe, but from want of preparation of heart cannot draw nearer.
- iii. The Executioners: those who by their wilful sin add to our LORD's pains.
- iv. The curious mob: those who hear the Passion, but care not for it.
- v. Those who remained in Jerusalem; those who know nothing yet of CHRIST.

II. We have eleven days in which to prepare to take our place on Good-Friday. Consider how we may keep Passiontide, so that we may be found very near to the Cross, with the Maries and S. John:

- i. Realize that every one *can* keep Passiontide: there are no obstacles.
- ii. It is in some places called the Still Week; move as in the room of a dying friend; hence practice Silence.
- iii. Let all the noise and bustle of work in the world make you think of the confusion of that Good-Friday, and so help you to realize the scene of the Passion.
- iv. Offer all the work you have to do to JESUS on the Cross, with JESUS on the Cross to GOD.
- v. Keep the scene continually in your thoughts, and use ejaculatory prayers.
- vi. Make your self-examination from that book of questions written in Blood; examine yourself by the details of the Passion; see in the sufferings on the Cross your sins, and resolve to repent.
- vii. Remember that your nearness to JESUS on the throne in eternity, depends on your nearness to Him on the Cross in time.

Affections.—Realize that it was for your sins that JESUS suffered; pray for true contrition; resolve on some real act of penitence.

FIFTH MONDAY IN LENT.

NABOTH.

"Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died."—I. Kings, xxi., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mock trial of Naboth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that like him you may be faithful to your trust.

Last Tuesday you meditated on Herod and Herodias, to-day consider their type; they were actors in the Passion, Ahab and Jezebel in the great type of the Passion; read the narrative (I. Kings, xxi).

I. Consider the type:

- i. The vineyard represents, first, the Church, and then our own soul.
- ii. Naboth=our LORD; Jezebel=the devil; Ahab=the weak tool which Satan uses, *e. g.*, Herod, Pilate, &c.
- iii. The charges in both, blasphemy; the mock trial; the false witnesses; the sentence, death; the leading forth out of the city.

II. Consider some of the details:

- i. The vineyard was hard by the palace: So the Church is hard by the palace of the prince of the world.
- ii. He wanted it only for a garden of herbs: So Satan wants to change the Church into a garden for growing the bitter herbs of sin.
- iii. *"I will give thee for it a better vineyard"*: So Satan offers our LORD all the kingdoms of the world for the kingdom of heaven.
- iv. *"The men of his city, even the elders and the nobles, . . . did as Jezebel had sent unto them"* (v. 11): So the people of Jerusalem were moved by Caiaphas; the power of one malicious spirit.

III. Consider Ahab's sin:

- i. Why did not Naboth sell? Because the Jewish law forbade the alienation of property, and he knew Ahab would not return it to his posterity; it was the inheritance of others.
- ii. When Ahab was refused by Naboth he sulked over it, too weak and cowardly to do the deed; then Jezebel taunts him. Have you ever been taunted or laughed into sin? If so, have you laid the blame on your tempter? God holds *you* guilty. Adam, and not Eve,—Ahab, and not Jezebel,—is spoken of as the sinner.
- iii. Of all the bad kings of Israel, Ahab was the worst; and yet even to him God gave many warnings, but in vain: the famine (ch. xvii., 1); destruction of the Baalites (xviii., 19); Ahab promised victory over Benhadad (xx., 13); at last death and dishonor pronounced by Elijah (xxi., 21); and then, through fear, and not through sorrow, he gave some signs of penitence.
 - (a.) At first, when Elijah came, he said: *"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy!"* He regards God's messenger as his enemy. How like many a sinner now!
 - (b.) When the sentence was pronounced, fear led him to give outward signs of penitence,—only outward, for the test of a broken and contrite heart is the breaking off of our sins; but Ahab continued as before,—we do not even find that he restored the vineyard.

Affections.—Realize that your soul is not your own to barter with Satan for what he offers in exchange; pray that you may be faithful in your care of God's vineyard; resolve, this Passiontide, to cancel some of the bargains Satan has made with you, by repenting of your sins.

FIFTH TUESDAY IN LENT.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ACTORS IN THE PASSION.—PILATE.

"And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.—S. Mark, xv., 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Pilate washing his hands of the blood of JESUS, and then scourging Him, and delivering Him to be crucified.

PRELUDE II.—Pray the prayer of David, "*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God.*"—Ps. li., 14.

The character of Pilate stands out strongly, as the type of those with animal courage, but moral cowardice.

I. Consider Pilate's character as a soldier, and a judge.

i. As a soldier:

(a.) Undoubted courage, and brute force of will.

(b.) Not wanting in decision; quelling by force, and even cruelty, the various insurrections of the Jews; as recorded in profane history, and in the slaughter of the Galileans. (S. Luke, xiii., 1.)

ii. As a judge:

(a.) A sincere desire to be just, and making many real efforts to save CHRIST.

(b.) And yet utter want of moral courage, manifesting a spirit of weakness, indecision, compromise, and dread of unpopularity.

II. Consider our LORD before Pilate as a picture of the struggles of CHRIST with a soul:

i. Pilate makes six distinct efforts to release our LORD.

(a.) The colloquy with CHRIST leading up to the question, What is truth? and followed by the declaration "*I find in Him no fault at all*" (S. John, xviii., 33-39); so many, now, find no fault in JESUS, but still believe not in Him, ask, What is truth? but do not wait for the answer.

(b.) At the mention of Galilee (S. Luke, xxiii., 5-13) he thinks to get out of his difficulty by sending him to Herod; his annoyance when he hears the noise of the crowd bringing Him back; he cannot get out of it (so now many a sinner shrinks from facing a difficulty, and strives to shift the responsibility of acting on to another's shoulders, but in vain); compelled to decide, he offers as a concession to scourge Him, and then release Him (S. Luke, xxiii., 13-17); this is the first act of thorough injustice, and compromise; now the people see they have him in their power.

(c.) He then tries to get the people to ask for our LORD instead of Barabbas (S. John, xviii., 39-40); here comes in his wife's dream. (S. Matt., xxvii., 19)

(d.) He washed his hands of the guilt of crucifying CHRIST (S. Matt., xxvii., 24), and yet the Creed says "suffered under Pontius Pilate."

(e.) He scourged Him, and said "*Ecce Homo*," to move them to compassion. (S. John, xix., 1-6.)

(f.) Then came out the true accusation, the Son of GOD; and the second examination of our LORD by Pilate. (S. John, xix., 8-13.)

ii. The cry "*Thou art not Caesar's friend*" (S. John, xix., 12) frightens the moral coward; he remembers his mismanagement of the country, and fears lest he should be accused to Caesar; JESUS must die, lest he be complained of, and yet he is complained of, and dies an exile, by his own hand. How often an old sin makes people commit another sin.

iii. Pilate's irritation with the people because they have overcome him:

(a.) The angry inscription above the Cross. (S. John, xix., 19.)

(b.) Giving the Body of our LORD to Joseph. (S. John, xix., 38.)

(c.) The reception their request for a guard met with. (S. Matt., xxvii., 65.)

III. Consider some of the lessons of Pilate's history:

i. The responsibility of being brought into contact with our LORD.

ii. What is truth? the necessity of an answer.

iii. The sin of moral cowardice. iv. The sin of compromise.

iv. The sin of consenting to another's sin.

v. Every mortal sin we commit is a delivering JESUS to be crucified.

Affections.—Contrition for all acts of religious cowardice, or compromise; pray that you may never, by mortal sin, crucify CHRIST; resolve not to play with temptation.

SIXTH WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, VI.—AGAINST SLOTH.

"It is finished."—S. John, xix., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on His death-bed, looking back over His whole life, comparing the work given Him to do, with the work accomplished, and then proclaiming that all had been finished.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be delivered from Sloth.

I. Consider the sin of Sloth :

i. Sloth of mind ; mental dissipation in building castles in the air, making many plans, and yet leaving all unfinished, &c.

ii. Sloth of soul : excited talking, &c., and so dissipation of the forces of the soul.

iii. Sloth of body ; the body rejoicing in its own incapacity ; rising late, idling over work, not working honestly for your living, letting others suffer by your sloth, procrastination, &c.

iv. Spiritual sloth ; allowing your prayers and devotions to be crowded out by work ; this is consistent with the most intense external activity.

II. Consider our LORD's witness against this sin :

i. "*It is finished.*" What is finished ? All the work of His life, the Work of Redemption, the Work of Example, all that JESUS came to do. We at times look back on our life, we shall do so on our death-bed, probably, what shall we see ? how many duties that we have never begun to do, how much that we did take in hand but left unfinished ; and the cause of it all, the deadly sin of sloth.

ii. How often we read in the Gospels, "*When Jesus had finished.*"—S. Matt., vii., 28 ; xi., 1 ; xiii., 53 ; xix., 1 ; xxvi., 1 ; S. John, iv., 34 ; v., 36 ; xvii., 4. Our LORD finished His work piece by piece, no hurry or confusion. The great preventive of sloth is, if possible, to finish each thing that we take in hand before we leave it ; to try not so much to do many things, as to do some things thoroughly.

iii. And yet when necessary our LORD could give up work which he had begun, *e. g.*, when to feed the multitude he gave up His intended Retreat. (S. Mark, vi., 31-46.)

III. Consider the meaning of our LORD's words, "*It is finished*".

i. It was the proclamation that GOD had fully done His part, prophecy had been fulfilled, sin had been atoned, the dignity of MAN had been fully manifested.

ii. It was the call to man to do his part, the means had been supplied, the example had been set, now He says to you "*The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to EVERY MAN HIS WORK.*"—S. Mark, xiii., 34. Are you doing your work ? when you give an account of it at the last, will you be able to say, "*It is finished.*"

iii. The first words of His life, "*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business,*" tell what is the business of life : these words tell how it has been done.

Affections.—Realize how much work you have to do for GOD in your own soul, and among those whom GOD has placed within your influence ; pray for a spirit of diligence ; and resolve to finish some two or three of the works which you have begun.

SIXTH THURSDAY IN LENT.

PERSONAL TYPES OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, VI.—ELIJAH.

"They will go from strength to strength, and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion."
—Ps. lxxxiv., 7. (Read also, 1. Kings, xix., 1 9.)

PRELUDE I.—Picture Elijah in despondency laying himself down under a juniper-tree, and requesting for himself that he might die.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in all temptations to despondency we may have grace to **seek** comfort and encouragement in our Communion.

I. Consider what Elijah had just been through, as narrated in the previous chapter.

i. How boldly he had braved to his face King Ahab seeking his destruction!—how he had called down fire from heaven to consume his sacrifice, and GOD had hearkened to his call!—how he had slain the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal!—how he had prophesied abundance of rain, and GOD had sent it!—how he had seen all these wonders worked by his own hand! One would think that after this such a thing as despondency would never tempt the stern prophet,—that he would be able to trust GOD to protect him in all dangers; and yet, when Jezebel sent to threaten to take away his life, he gave way to utter despondency, and went and lay down under a juniper-tree, and requested for himself that he might die, *"Now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers."* Perhaps he thought that if all the miracles he had wrought did not deter Jezebel from persecuting GOD's servants, did not turn her from her idolatry, nothing would, and it was no use trying to do GOD'S work any more.

ii. As he slept, an angel touched him, and said unto him, *"Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken."* &c. Is not this meat a type of the Blessed Sacrament? for in the strength of it he went through the wilderness for forty days and nights unto Horeb, the Mount of GOD, to speak with GOD.

II. Consider how we may apply this to ourselves when tempted to despondency about the Church:

i. The world has seen the miracles of the Church, the way in which She has weathered every storm, and endured every foe; and yet the world still persecutes and threatens, like Jezebel. No sooner are we delivered by GOD'S Hand from one danger, than another arises. Is it any use struggling any more? Do we not sometimes feel inclined to lie down like Elijah, and say, It is enough, now let me die, for I am not better than my fathers; I will give up the struggle.

ii. But what is the power in which we are to trust? The angel's Cake, the Blessed Sacrament, Gideon's Cake of Barley-Bread, which was stronger than the hosts of Midian, when they were arrayed against GOD'S people of old; the Stone, cut without hands, that smote and cast down Nebuchadnezzar's image. While we have JESUS, in the Blessed Sacrament, in the Church, we need fear little the threats of the world; She will float on the waves of the world, like the Ark, till at last She rests for ever on Mount Zion.

III. Consider how we may apply this to ourselves, when tempted to despondency about our own spiritual life:

i. Are we not often tempted to despond, because, with all the greater helps in the Church, which our fathers knew but little of, we make so little progress in the spiritual life, we gain such slight advantages over our besetting sins, that after having conquered them in one form, killed them, like Baal's prophets, in Confession, they rise and threaten us again, and we feel inclined to lay down our arms and give up the fight.

ii. But is there no help? Yes, there is the Holy Eucharist. An angel-hand touches us, an angel-voice whispers in our ear, *Arise and eat!* and in the strength of that *Esca viatorum* we may go through the forty days and forty nights of temptation, and come out of the wilderness unscathed.

IV. Our Preparation, Communion, and Thanksgiving:

i. Preparation. Consider the great things GOD has done for us already, the dangers in which He has protected us, the troubles from which He has delivered us, and therefore put away despondency.

ii. Communion. Consider when the LORD came to speak to Elijah, the LORD was not in the wind, nor earthquake, nor fire, but in the still small voice. With us He speaks not in great things, but in the stillness and quiet of the Blessed Sacrament. *"I sleep, but my heart waketh."* Trust then in that; listen there for the Voice of GOD.

iii. Thanksgiving: Thank GOD for giving you the Corn of the mighty, for having preserved you in so many and great dangers; thank Him because you know that He is your strength, so that you shall not greatly fall.

Affections.—Desire that your zeal for GOD'S work may never flag; resolve in all temptations or difficulties to seek the Blessed Sacrament; pray that you may never give way to despondency; pray that you may go in the strength of that Bread through the forty days and forty nights of the pilgrimage of this life, and may come at length to Horeb, the Mount of GOD, and there see GOD, no longer with the veil between, but face to face.

SIXTH FRIDAY IN LENT.

THE CROSS, THE PILGRIM'S SUPPORT.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."—Ps. xxiii., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD passing through the valley of the shadow leaning on the death-bed of the Holy Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the Cross may be your comfort in life, and your resting-place in death.

I. Consider the valley of the shadow of death as the world, through which we have to pass on our pilgrimage Zionwards:

i. In this world the shadow of physical death rests on everything; every moment, we, and all around us, are dying; from the cradle the shadow is on us, till at the grave it changes to death itself.

ii. Evil, the shadow of moral death, meets us at every step, and threatens to overwhelm us in eternal death.

iii. The world, too, is a valley, which we have to descend, till we stand on the shores of that cold river of death, which runs at the bottom, and which has to be crossed before the pilgrim can ascend the hill on which is the palace of the Great King. Christian life is a continual descent, a ladder of humiliation, until, having reached the lowest place, ONE says, "*Friend, go up higher!*"—and we take our place at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. Having humbled ourselves even to death, He will exalt us to life eternal.

II. Consider the "Rod and Staff" as the Holy Cross:

i. The Rod and Staff, like the two sticks of the widow of Zarephath (I. Kings, xvii., 12), represent that Cross on which JESUS leaned in the days of His Pilgrimage here, and which He leaves behind Him to support you in your journey Home.

ii. Doctrinally: the Staff is the Incarnation, the great truth on which the Christian rests; and from which flow all the Sacraments, which are his support in this vale of misery, and which unite him to His LORD; the Rod represents the Passion, the other great dogma of the Faith, the Atonement, by which our sins are washed away, and a remedy for the ills of life provided.

iii. Practically: in our life they signify the Rod of Chastisement when we go wrong, the Staff of Spiritual Consolation when we go right; thus corresponding with the wine and oil in the parable of the Good Samaritan—the wine of penitence, the oil of comfort.

III. Consider the Holy Cross as our support in life's travels:

i. "*Thou art with me.*" The Rod and Staff are useless without CHRIST. The Cross, whether in chastisement or consolation, is no comfort unless it is CHRIST'S Cross.

ii. The worldling has his crosses and crowns, his disappointments and joys, but they do not comfort him; the crosses only make him hard and soured; the joys, self-confident and careless.

iii. The comfort of the Cross in every trial and blessing is to feel that it is shared with CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize the shadow of death on everything, warning you that this is but the place of exile and pilgrimage; pray that you may lean on the Cross for comfort; resolve to make this act of faith in our LORD'S Presence, when tempted, "*Thou, Lord, art with me.*"

SIXTH SATURDAY IN LENT.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS, VI.—THE RESULTS OF TEMPTATION.

"Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."—S. Matt., iv., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD surrounded by the glories of the Heavenly Hosts.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may seek the spiritual glories of angelic fellowship, in preference to the material glories of the world's society.

I. Consider the devil leaving CHRIST: S. Luke adds, *"For a season"*:

i. He leaves us in the hope of lulling us into false security, and spiritual sloth, tempting us by his very absence, and intending, if he finds us off our guard, to return with seven other spirits, worse than those that tempted us before.

ii. He leaves us that he may plot some new form of temptation: times of freedom from temptation ought not to be regarded as holidays, but as opportunities of strengthening our defences, and preparing for the next attack.

iii. He is not conquered, only repulsed; it is only the victory of successful defence; we have to hold our position till we are relieved by order of our Captain, and sent home. The devil returned to our LORD again and again during His Ministry, and made his final attack on Calvary. There is but one door of escape from temptation: Death.

II. Consider what the devil leaves behind:

i. Love and Faith: a fresh motive for loving GOD; another argument for trusting Him, that He has not suffered us to fall.

ii. Self-knowledge and Humility: Each attack shows us our weak points, and the better we know ourselves, the more humble we shall be.

iii. Merit and Solidity: Each temptation has its own crown, if resisted, and each assault repulsed leaves a new proof of the solidity of our defences.

III. Consider what GOD sends us as a reward:

i. Angelic consolation.

ii. A closer union with CHRIST.

iii. More grace, for grace increases with use.

IV. Consider the results of our Lenten temptations:

i. Has GOD seen in us the development of any virtue?

ii. Has the devil been fairly defeated as regards any one definite sin?

iii. Have we been obedient to the leadings of the HOLY GHOST?

Affections.—Realize that temptation is to be a life-long warfare with us; thank GOD for any victories gained this Lent; pray for grace to endure our temptations; resolve to be especially watchful against the return of old temptations after Easter.

PALM-SUNDAY.

THE EVENTS OF THE DAY.

"I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof."—Cant., vii., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD entering Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be in the great Procession in which at the last He enters the New Jerusalem.

The Procession was only about two miles, but three important incidents occurred.

I. Consider our LORD weeping over Jerusalem.—(S. Luke, xix., 41.) Why did He weep?

- i. He knew the condition of that city ; He knows your condition, your sins.
- ii. He knew it was their last call ; this Holy Week may be your last call.
- iii. They knew not the day of their visitation : take care, lest this be said of you, as the summing up of your life.

II. Consider the Palm Procession. (S. John, xii., 12):

i. He rode in triumph on the colt, which had been brought to Him ; a little while before it had been "*tied by the door without in a place where two ways met*" : Have you allowed those, whom JESUS sent, to bring you to Him, or are you still "*tied and bound by the chain of your sins*" ?

ii. The people strewed palm-boughs in the way : Have you provided a palm-bough to lay at JESUS' feet this Passion-tide ? Your soul was the bough to win which He climbed the Palm-tree of the Holy Cross ; are you climbing for your palm-bough ?

iii. They stripped off their garments too ; have you any garment you ought to strip off ? any habit of sin ? will you strip it off and cast it at JESUS' feet, as you cry Hosanna, Lord, save us ? He cannot save you if you do not.

III. Consider the Voice in the Temple. (S. John, xii., 28-30.):

i. Three times in His life the Bath Kol was heard, at His entering on His three Offices. (See page 55.)

ii. It had a two-fold effect on the hearers ; to some it seemed as if it thundered, to others as if an angel spake ; so GOD's voice always sounds differently to different hearts. When speaking of Easter Communion, He says, through His Church, "*Come, for all things are now ready,*" it sounds to the impenitent sinner as though it thundered ; it is so awful, he dare not come ! to the penitent, as though an angel spake, the invitation is so sweet.

iii. How does GOD's voice sound to you ?

Affections.—Thanksgiving and praise ; pray that you may have your part in the Cross now, in the Crown hereafter ; resolve to win your palm-bough.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE EVENTS OF THE DAY.

"Now in the morning as He returned into the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away."—S. Matt., xxi., 18-19

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD examining the fig-tree for fruit.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that, this Holy Week, CHRIST may see of the travail of His Soul in you, and be satisfied.

Two events to-day—the Cursing of the fig-tree, and the Cleansing of the Temple.

I. Consider the events :

i. Why did our LORD curse the fig-tree ? Because it was fruitless, though with great promise of leaves ; as a warning to the impenitent ; but especially as a type of what He was to find immediately afterward in Jerusalem.

ii. In the Temple, what did He see ? Leaves in plenty, but what fruit ? Priests, Vestments, grand Services, &c., but what fruit ? Buying, and selling, &c. And yet they were God's chosen people ; they had had every care, warnings, calls, visitations, without limit ; and now "*a den of thieves !*" What words could be stronger !

II. Consider the application to yourself :

i. You are the tree by the road-side, which JESUS will pass on His way to His Passion this week. He will come *hungry* to examine you for fruit. What will He find ? He will say to you from the Cross, "*I thirst.*" What will you give Him ? And yet you have been planted by the water-side. (P's. i., 3.) What more could you have had ? Calls, opportunities, Sacraments ! you show plenty of leaves, your joining in the penitential services of Passiontide ! but what "*fruits worthy of repentance*" (S. Luke, iii., 8) will JESUS find ? Adam and Eve tried to hide their sin with fig-leaves, so do many now—no fruit ! then you must die !

ii. The other event is equally a picture of your soul ; it is God's Temple ; He comes into it, and what does He see ?

iii. This week will be only the preliminary examination ; next Sunday JESUS will really come into your soul in your Easter Communion, and that will be the test. What will he find ?

Affections.—Realize the danger of external signs of penitence satisfying us without real contrition ; pray that you may bring forth fruit ; resolve to be very thorough in your penitence this week.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE WATCH BY THE CROSS.

"And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done."—II. Sam., xxi., 10-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the ghastly scene, the barren rock in the famine-stricken land, the victims of divine Justice, who have been hanged in the hill before the LORD!

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be faithful in your watch by the Cross this week.

I. Consider the type of the Crucifixion here:

- i. The famine on account of the sin of the broken covenant, representing the moral famine of the Jewish world, caused by rebellion against GOD'S laws.
- ii. The expiation: The seven sons hanged in the hill before the LORD, He who was "dearer than seven sons," crucified on Calvary.
- iii. Rizpah's loving watch, and the Blessed Mother of GOD watching her Divine Son on the Cross.

II. Consider Rizpah's penitential watch:

- i. The sackcloth spread on the rock; the bodily mortification which should wear away our rocky hearts.
- ii. She suffered neither the birds nor beast to touch the bodies; let us, as we watch, see that no unholy thought or action of ours touches the Body we are watching, or defiles the place in our hearts, which we have prepared for His tomb.
- iii. She watched until the burial. So we, until on Easter-Day He is laid in our hearts; and then another watch begins, not of penitence, but of joy.

III. Consider the result of Rizpah's watch: It was told the king; "*and after that God was intreated for the land*"—v. 14.

- i. No need to tell our King, for from the Cross He looks down to see who is watching.
- ii. He is intreated for the land of our soul, and instead of famine, feeds us with the Bread of Life.
- iii. "*Blessed is he that watcheth.*"—Rev., xvi., 15. Let us try to earn this blessing, as Rizpah did.

Affections.—Realize that you are called personally to watch by the Cross; pray for grace to be faithful; resolve to devote a definite time this week to watching.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS, VII.—AGAINST COVETOUSNESS.

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—S. Luke, xxiii, 46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD commending Himself into His Father's hands with His last words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from covetousness.

We draw near once again to the pulpit of the Cross, to hear the last mighty sermon of the great Preacher. It comes to us with even greater force, in that it is His dying word; it sums up all the duties of the Christian life, and witnesses against the world-wide sin of covetousness.

I. Consider the sin of Covetousness:

i. It is essentially worldliness, and its seat is especially the soul—a craving to possess.

ii. It is the sin which is attractive enough to engross the greater part of the world, and to lead them to lives of self-denial in its pursuit, which, if lived for CHRIST, would make them Saints.

iii. It exists, like all, in a spiritual form, in a craving for more gifts and graces, (when we do not use what we have)—for faster progress in Christian life.

II. Consider our LORD's witness against this sin:

i. Throughout His life He had kept Himself detached from creatures, had lived a life of poverty, having not where to lay His head, depending on the ministrations of others for the very necessities of life. JESUS in His Passion had gradually given up all His little possessions,—His clothes, His mother, and friend, the comfort of His Father's presence,—now He gives up His life itself: what a sermon against covetousness!

ii. Let us learn from JESUS crucified a lesson of detachment. How many things we covet!—fine dress, JESUS was stripped; a fine house, JESUS had only the Cross; money, JESUS was very poor; praise of men, JESUS was reviled; friends and relatives, JESUS gave up S. Mary and S. John; life, JESUS gave up His for us. The great remedy is taught us in these last words of our LORD, to commend all things into our Father's hands—to be satisfied with what He gives us.

iii. We must leave our possessions when we die: let us learn now to be detached from them—it will save the struggle then. There is only one real possession, JESUS Himself. The passion of HAVING is part of our nature, and so not wrong in itself—only wrong when we crave for unworthy objects. Before the fall, it was satisfied by GOD; now, it is either earthly possessions or JESUS CHRIST: which are we seeking?

III. Consider the teaching of our LORD's last words: "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit*"; they sum up the Christian's life—devotion to the will of GOD.

i. It was the ruling passion of our LORD's life, and strong in death.

ii. Is your life one of doubt, difficulty, or sorrow? This is the panacea for all life's trials.

iii. It is the great preparation for death: JESUS says it, bows His head, and dies!

Affections.—Realize the subtle forms in which you may be tempted to the sin of covetousness; examine yourself in this sin; pray for grace of detachment; resolve to cultivate a spirit of devotion to the will of GOD.

MAUNDY-THURSDAY.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him. What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."—S. John, xiii., 6-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD washing His disciple's feet.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may rightly prepare for your Easter Communion.

Before the Passover there was a day of preparation: Is not Maundy-Thursaday this to us, for the great Passover next Sunday? The Institution of the Holy Eucharist is introduced by our LORD's washing the disciples' feet: is not this *the* preparation?

I. Consider the three things needed in preparation for the Holy Eucharist, as taught by our LORD's action:

i. Humility: With what perfect humility our LORD performed this lowliest office for His disciples. We must come with humility—not in any spirit of pride—to the Holy Eucharist.

ii. Purity: The action was chiefly to symbolize both the need of purity, and the impossibility of being purified in any other way than by our LORD's washing: "*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.*"

iii. Love: It was the manifestation of His love,—that love which led Him to delight in humiliation and suffering. We must make our acts of love in preparation for the Blessed Sacrament, and, if they are real, they will lead us to acts of humiliation, and purification too.

II. Consider the danger of *formal* preparation only:

i. Judas was washed too, ritually the same as the other Apostles.

ii. He made his Communion, having, in the eyes of men, fulfilled all outward conditions of preparation.

iii. There is a danger of using Sacraments after a *formal* preparation, but without right dispositions, without real preparation of heart.

III. Consider the effects of the Sacraments: "*What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

i. In the washing: As we go on in the life of penitence, as He washes us more and more from our sins, we get a deeper realization of what is the power of the Precious Blood; but not until we see the cleansed soul radiant in the glories of eternity shall we really know the full effects of Absolution.

ii. In the feeding: Who can look into the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the Communion of the soul with the whole Body of CHRIST, the feeding of the soul with the flesh of CHRIST, until, by that food, the very nature is changed into the nature of CHRIST!

iii. "*Thou shalt know hereafter*": The promise is clear, and one of the joys of eternity will be to know these things. Oh, let us accept them with faith, use them with love, and wait until the veil be lifted, and we see face to face Him whose promise we believed, and whose command we obeyed, when He said, "*What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

Affections.—Realize how the love and humiliation of our LORD is manifested in every H. E.; pray that you may never come unprepared; resolve on some special preparation for your Easter Communion.

GOOD-FRIDAY.*

THE CROSS THE KEY OF HEAVEN.

"And the Key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulders ; so he shall open, and none shall shut ; and he shall shut, and none shall open."—Isaiah, xxii., 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD carrying the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in Cross-bearing.

Good-Friday night, a time of holy calm, a time to reflect, to ask, now JESUS is dead, what He has left us.

I. Consider the Legacies of JESUS : they are so many, so rich !

i. His Work, His Example ; some would have us think this was all ; if so, we might admire, but how could we love ? No, there are two others especially, standing out in strong relief against the evening sky, the Cross, and the Body of JESUS.

ii. The Cross to carry through life till our Good-Friday.

iii. The Body to give us strength to bear the Cross (this will be the subject of to-morrow's meditation).

II. Consider the prophecy of Isaiah :

i. Gabriel promised that CHRIST should inherit the throne of His Father David (S. Luke, i., 32) ; Isaiah that on CHRIST should be laid the Key of the House of David ; the Throne and the Key are the same ; the Holy Cross in which He sat to reign, and die ; the Holy Cross with which he opened "the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

ii. David's life had a two-fold character ; on the one side he was happy, great, and glorious ; on the other, sorrowful, afflicted, poor ; David was persecuted and mocked by his brethren in the camp ; pursued by Saul his king ; ridiculed by Michal his wife ; scorned by Shimei his friend ; fought against by his neighbours the Ammonites ; rebelled against by his own subjects, and his own son ; and not only was he afflicted, but very poor ; his home a cave ; from Abimelech he accepted bread, from Nabal milk and cheese, from Abigail grapes and figs ; among the afflicted he was most afflicted, among the poor the poorest ; and in all this he was a type of CHRIST.

iii. The Cross was the legacy which David handed down to CHRIST, and which our LORD has left to us, as our great treasure ; the key by which "*a door is opened in heaven.*" (Rev. iv., 1), and entrance gained to the treasures and glories of His Kingdom.

III. Consider the Cross as the Key of heaven :

i. CHRIST carried that heavy Cross till death, and then with that Key unlocked heaven ; so with us, the Key is laid on our shoulder, for if we would follow CHRIST, we must take up our Cross.

ii. We must have that Cross on our shoulder *always*, for we know not the moment of our death, the moment of arriving at Heaven's Gate ; how sad to be summoned there at a moment when the Cross is not on our shoulder, and to find that we have not, when most we need it, the Key which will unlock those gates. It is useless bearing the Cross through life, if we lay it down before death, only one key will unlock the Gates of Heaven, the Key of the House of David, the Holy Cross.

iii. This Key too will open every gate by the way ; the Cross, in mental anguish, perplexity, doubt, sorrow, loss of friends, poverty, pain, trial, temptation ; the Cross, in penitence, will open each fast-closed door ; how rich a legacy ! the Key which unlocks all the treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Affections.—Recognize the crosses of your life in their true light ; pray that you may love and cherish this legacy of JESUS ; resolve to persevere in the carrying of your Cross.

*For Good-Friday evening.

HOLY-SATURDAY.

THE LEGACIES OF JESUS.—THE BODY.

"And when Joseph had taken the Body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock."....."So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."—8. Matt., xxvii., 59, 60 and 66.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Body being taken down from the Cross, and laid in the tomb.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may make a good Easter Communion.

Yesterday we stood by the Cross, and considered it as one of the legacies of JESUS; to day we are called to the tomb, it encloses the dead Body of CHRIST, dead from a separation from the vital principle, the soul, but no separation of the Hypostatic union.

I. Consider this great legacy of JESUS; His Body in the Holy Eucharist:

i. To be the object of our personal love, and care.
ii. To be the strength of our life; having won His victory, He comes to help us to win ours; how could we bear the Cross without Him; the legacy of the Cross would have been no legacy of blessing, unless JESUS had left us, too, His Body to strengthen us.

iii. To be the food of our journey Home.

II. Consider how the Body was treated by the friends of JESUS:

i. "*Laid in a new tomb*"; we have been praying every day this Lent, "Create and make in me a new and contrite heart"; and surely for this, that that new heart may be His tomb.

ii. "*Hewn out in the rock*"; does not this well represent the work of Lent on our rocky hearts; the word *contrition* implies the wearing away of our stony nature; have we accepted the discipline of Lent, as the blows of the chisel, which are to *make room* in us for the Body of JESUS; once there was no room for Him.

iii. They went and begged the Body of JESUS; so let us in humble love, and certain faith, to-morrow.

III. Consider the lesson taught us by the enemies of JESUS:

i. They feared lest the Body might be stolen away, let us fear this too, and so learn from them.

ii. They sealed the stone, making the sepulchre sure; let us seal the door of our hearts with an earnest resolve, lest any evil enter, and drive JESUS out.

iii. They set a watch; so must we; we have been watching Him in His Passion, now let us watch ourselves, lest that Passion is acted over again in our hearts, and we "*crucify the Son of GOD afresh*."

Affections.—Realize the privilege of possessing the Body of JESUS; pray that you may be faithful to Him; resolve to watch after your Communion to-morrow.

EASTER-DAY.

THE JOYS OF EASTER.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it."—Ps. cxviii., 24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a calm, bright, sunny day succeeding a great storm.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may experience some of the joys of Easter.

What a change! from the deepest darkness to the brightest light, from sorrow which has no equal to joy which can have no peer, from storm and strife at last to peace.

I. Consider that Easter-Day is the day which the LORD hath made, not only like other days, but *hath* made it what it is, the Day of days, the LORD's Day, a day so bright that it casts its rays on all the Sundays of the year, and requires a *weekly* festival to commemorate it.

II. What are the special joys in which we are to rejoice on Easter-Day? Consider some of those which of necessity depend upon, and flow out of, each other:

i. The joy of Life; there is a joy in life itself, and this is intensified in a life from the dead; there is no possibility of joy without life, and so this gift is the fountain from which flow all other Easter joys.

ii. Then the joy of Victory; not only of our LORD's Victory, but the pledge and means of our own; for as He gives us the participation of His Life, so having won His victory He comes to help us to win ours.

iii. Then the joy of Peace; the great joy, the result of victory, there can be no peace without war; so Easter peace is the result of the Lenten struggle—Easter peace of the battle-field of Calvary: we began Lent by setting our faces to go up to Jerusalem, the vision of peace; but three days ago all was storm and strife, now the storm is over and the battle-clouds have dispersed, and we have the vision of peace.

iv. Then the joy of Harvest; Refreshment-Sunday told of the famine of the soul here, and pointed to that, in type, which is the reality of Easter, our Communion; and this is the result of peace, for "*He maketh peace in thy borders: and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.*"—Ps. cxlvii., 14.

v. Then the joy of the risen life in which all these culminate, and for which they are the preparation; life, victory, peace, Communion, these are some of the joys of Easter, and each is a foretaste and figure of the joy of eternity.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the Easter gift; pray for a participation in these joys; resolve to strive to cultivate the risen life.

MONDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

LIFE FROM THE DEAD.

"*I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*"—Rev., i., 18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in glory in heaven, as described by S. John in this chapter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that He may raise you from the death of sin.

I. Consider that Good-Friday makes Easter-Day what it is, not only the Day of *life*, but of *life from the dead*, gives it its special joy, the joy of contrast.

i. "*Was dead*"—yes! not many hours ago we saw Him die; the spear-wound, the witness of the soldiers and of the angels, all assure us of that "*and was dead*;" and now He is alive, and more still, alive for evermore—death hath no more dominion over Him.

ii. And Easter is not only the joy of contemplating JESUS in His Resurrection, but of being partakers with Him in it; and so this is the supreme joy of Easter, not only that we *are alive*, but that we *were dead*—oh, how dead in sin once; and now we are to say, "*I am he that liveth!*" What a contrast to what we were! Let us not forget it, for our sins now ought to be the fuel of our love; being what we *are*, we did not fear to remember what we *were*.

iii. "*Alive for evermore*;" the life in which we rejoice at Easter is not that life which is but a succession of deaths, but that eternal life, which we have by virtue of our union with CHRIST—"whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life."—S. John, vi., 54.

II. "*And have the Keys of hell and of death.*" Consider that:

i. While His Body rested in the grave, His Soul and Spirit were not idle in Hades; He opened those gates, and brought out the "prisoners of hope"—by His death He has won the Key by which He opens the gate of heaven to all believers.

ii. This Key on the evening of Easter-Day He delivered to His Church in Sacramental power, as He had before in Word, when He said, "*I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven*," etc.—S. Matt., xvi., 19; and this is part of our Easter joy, that death and hell have lost their power, for there is forever in the Church the Key which will unlock the prison-house of the penitent sinner.

iii. Life is joy. Let us rejoice in this eternal life, which is ours, and let the thought of the death which was once upon us, make us indeed thrill with grateful joy as we say these words—I, too, am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore!

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the grace of absolution; pray for right dispositions to receive it; resolve to use the power of the Keys, committed to the Church, for the benefit of your own Soul.

TUESDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

"That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection."—Phil., iii., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the great earthquake (S. Matt., xxviii., 2) as the type of that resurrection power which touches and moves all nature.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may know in yourself the power of His resurrection.

Consider the effects of our LORD's resurrection on all the chief actors in the drama of the soul's life, on all the principal forces in the World's great battlefield.

I. On the enemies of the soul:

i. The Devil; for the first time his power shattered; others had risen, but only to die again; death had still dominion over them; others had risen, but only with their natural bodies, not with glorified bodies; the Resurrection of CHRIST was the cutting off Goliath's head with his own sword; the hanging Haman on his own gallows.

ii. The World: the great antidote to worldliness; S. Paul at Athens preached JESUS and the Resurrection; there the world was well represented, intellectual, sensual, seeking the excitement of novelty. The doctrine of the Resurrection throws the world back into a mere training-school for eternity; the creatures all pass away, they will not rise again to a glorified life, like man, therefore they cannot be man's true end.

iii. The Flesh; passions are given to be disciplined; without passion we might do good, we could not love good. Passion is the sword of love; it must be used against our foes, not in wounding ourselves, for the day is to dawn when every passion which has been disciplined here, will have its beatitude in eternity.

II. On man himself; the resurrection alters his view of life, shows him it is only a time of probation and exile, and gives him a grand hope:

i. The Body; it will rise, therefore must be kept pure; it will bear the marks of this life in eternity, hence it must be watched, and guarded from dishonour; all pain and infirmity will be left in the grave, hence suffering is to be welcomed here.

ii. The Mind; the doctrine of the resurrection teaches us to cultivate and grasp divine truth in all its kingdoms; all else will perish in the grave.

iii. The Soul; its powers and faculties must be developed; the beatitude of heaven depends on the capacity developed on earth.

III. The power of His Resurrection should be a real influence in our lives; as each morning calls us to rise to another day, we must rise to another life; so that our whole life being made up of days, which are miniature lives, every part may have been touched by the power of resurrection.

Affections.—Joy at the Resurrection of CHRIST; pray for grace to rise with Him; resolve that each morning shall see a fresh endeavour to serve Him.

WEDNESDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

THE BRIDEGROOM'S CALL.

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."—Cant., ii., 10-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate all nature in its spring-time teeming with new life and singing this song.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may obey the call, and rise up, like all around, to new energy in the spiritual life.

We may take these words as addressed by the Risen LORD to the Soul that is trying to follow Him.

I. Consider the titles by which CHRIST calls the soul:

i. My love; because reconciled to Him by His Death; He has proved His love for her, that she is indeed His loved one.

ii. My fair one; because now, washed from her sins by His Precious Blood, as she draws near to GOD she reflects the image of the Divine beauty in herself as in a mirror.

iii. My dove (this title is inserted here by Septuagint, Vulgate and other versions); because of the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST.

II. Consider the grounds on which CHRIST invites the soul:

i. "*The Winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*" This may be taken of the two aspects of our LORD'S Passion; the Winter, of desertion and desolation; the rain, the floods and billows of persecution (Ps. lxxix.).

ii. "*The flowers appear on the earth:*" the fruits of that Passion in the lives of the Saints and Martyrs.

iii. "*The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land:*" the time to sing the Easter-Song. "*This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*"—Ps. cxviii., 24: the Voice of the Turtle in our land, the HOLY GHOST speaking in our heart.

III. Consider the invitation: "*Rise up and come away:*"

i. From the pleasures of the world, from earthly things.

ii. From sin; "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"—S. Matt., xi., 28.

iii. To Heaven; where I go to prepare a place for you; where you have "*an house not made with hands, eternal.*"

Affections.—Gratitude for the invitation; pray that you may so purify yourself that CHRIST may be able to call your soul His love, His fair one, His dove; resolve to obey the call by giving up some definite worldly pleasure, some definite habit of sin.

THURSDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

JESUS THE CONQUEROR.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."—Rev., iii., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate JESUS as the Conqueror rising from the grave.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that when He comes to you in your Communion He may give you strength to conquer your foes.

I. Who comes? JESUS the Conqueror: Consider:

i. He conquered the WORLD, by keeping Himself detached from it, unmoved alike by its offers and threats; when it offered Him honour, and desired to make Him a King, He hid Himself from the world (S. John, vi., 15); when it threatened Him with death for claiming a Kingdom, He was not deterred by its threat (S. John, xviii., 33-37).

ii. He conquered the FLESH, disciplining and controlling perfectly that Body of Human Flesh, which He took of the B. V. Mary. In long nights of fasting and prayer, in the hours of His Passion, under the scourge, and on the Cross, He manifested the Self-Control of a Conqueror of Self.

iii. He conquered the DEVIL, on those two great battlefields, in the wilderness of the Temptation, and on Calvary.

II. To whom does He come? To one who has voluntarily entered the ranks of His army, and sworn to fight against those same three foes, but who is always failing.

III. Why does He come? To help me to conquer: Consider:

i. Having won His Victory He comes to help me to win mine against each of those three foes.

ii. Having conquered Self, He comes to teach me by example and to help me by grace to conquer my undisciplined self.

iii. Having conquered death by dying, He comes to teach me how to die, to impart to me the principle of resurrection from the dead, for He has said, "*Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*"—S. John, vi., 54.

Affections.—Rejoice at Christ's Victory; pray that you may be more faithful; resolve on some act of self-conquest.

FRIDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

THE EASTER RESOLUTION.

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."—Cant., iv., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the empty Cross on Calvary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may take up your Cross daily, and follow CHRIST.

The text is one of those short verses in which is summed up the law of our LORD's life, and therefore of our own.

I. Consider the meaning of the verse:

i. What is this day to which the speaker points as the end of his toils? Easter-Day, when the gloom of the dark night of sin is dispersed by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, and all shadows flee away.

ii. What is this mountain of myrrh? Calvary. Myrrh is the great figure of penitence; it is generally obtained in small quantities; the Bride speaks of a bundle of myrrh as a great deal (Cant., i., 13), but a mountain! This shews the greatness of our LORD's contrition; the mountain of myrrh is the Hill of Calvary, where JESUS did penance for the sins of the world!

iii. What is this hill of frankincense? Frankincense is the type of devotion, prayer, and oblation, acceptable to God; and where was this more perfectly offered than on Calvary?

II. We may consider this as the motto of our LORD's life; Calvary and Easter-Day ever before Him:

i. Easter-Day was the day of joy, to which He looked forward, "*Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.*"—Heb., xii., 2.

ii. Calvary was the mountain of myrrh to which He was ever going up, that He might there make the sin-offering, which was to take away the sins of the world.

iii. Calvary, too, was the hill of frankincense, for from another point of view we see offered the sweet savour offering of a life of perfect obedience, and act of perfect worship, and love.

III. Easter is only a festival of anticipation, as far as we are concerned, a little gleam of sunlight, which soon passes; until our true Easter dawns, this must be the motto of our life:

i. The Cross, which we must daily take up the mountain of myrrh.

ii. The Body, the one oblation by which all our devotions are made acceptable; by the gift of which we receive strength to bear the Cross.

iii. These may seem sad thoughts for Easter, but they are practical ones; we must persevere in our penitence, and in our Communion, until our Good-Friday, when we lay down the Cross and die upon it; when we receive our last Communion, and with it commend and offer ourselves to God—until our Easter-Morning, when the day breaks and all shadows flee away.

Affections.—Resignation to the sorrows of life; pray for perseverance in penitence; resolve to take up more cheerfully your own special Cross.

SATURDAY IN EASTER-WEEK.

BAPTISM A RESURRECTION.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—Col., iii., 1-3

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in His glorious Session at the Right Hand of GOD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be more heavenly-minded.

I. Consider one of the effects of Baptism on the soul, viz., Resurrection:

i. *"If ye then were raised with Christ;"* the Aorist *συνήγερθητε* refers to a definite point of time, when the being raised with Christ took place, viz., Baptism.

ii. Baptism is a resurrection from the dead; as truly a raising of the soul from the death of sin, which is a separation from GOD, as was our LORD's Resurrection a raising of His Body from that death, which was a separation from the soul.

iii. Baptism is a raising of the whole life into another plane; from being citizens of earth, to become citizens of heaven.

II. Consider one of the consequences which ought to follow on this Baptism, or Resurrection of the soul:

i. The seeking those things which are above, where CHRIST is, sitting at the Right Hand of GOD, *i. e.*, seeking the things of that city of which by Baptism we have been made citizens, and where all our interests should be.

ii. To fail in this is to set our affections on the things of that dying life, out of which we have been raised, to love those things which are hostile to the interests of our new Country, to be untrue to ourselves, and our King.

iii. To set our affections on things above, *i. e.*, to be heavenly-minded, is to love those things which are the proper objects of our love, and which we can possess in eternity.

III. Consider that our true life is this resurrection-life into which we were lifted at our Baptism:

i. *"For ye died;"* the Aorist *ἀπεθάνετε* points to an act, not a state, to the act of Baptism, which was a death to the perishing things of this world.

ii. *"Your life is hid with Christ in God;" i. e.*, your true life is that inner hidden life, which men cannot see now, but which you live by virtue of your sacramental union with CHRIST.

iii. And this hidden life, the Resurrection of CHRIST calls you to remember, is at once the privilege, and responsibility of your Baptism.

Affections.—Gratitude for the gift of Baptism; pray that you may be more faithful to its requirements; resolve to examine yourself on your Baptismal vows.

LOW-SUNDAY.

THE LORD'S-DAY.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."—Rev., i., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John on the Sunday in his exile on Patmos hearing the Voice and seeing the Vision of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be in the Spirit on the Lord's-days, that your Sundays may be to you revelations of JESUS CHRIST.

I. Consider what it is that makes Easter-Day so joyous:

- i. Good-Friday; when the Corn of Wheat dies, and falls into the ground (S. John, xii., 24).
- ii. Our Easter Eucharist, the promised fruits of the Wheat.
- iii. The joy of Easter-Day, then, is the two-fold result of our Communion, enhanced by the dark background of Calvary.

II. Consider that every Sunday shines with the reflected light of Easter-Day, is a festival of the Resurrection, and may be joyous like Easter if:

- i. We keep the Fridays as our Church commands, for Good-Friday casts the shadow of the Cross on every Friday; we must sow in tears, if we are to reap in joy (Ps. cxxvi., 5); we must mourn, if we are to be comforted (S. Matt., v., 4).
- ii. We are at the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. And:
- iii. If our Sundays are days of gloom is it not because we neglect one or both of these rules of the Church?

III. Consider what that Sunday was to S. John:

- i. S. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's-Day, and therefore he received a revelation of JESUS CHRIST, a glimpse of heaven; if we are in the Spirit on Sundays, we shall receive a revelation of heaven, and JESUS CHRIST Himself in our Communion.
- ii. When we go up to the Altar, we go up, as S. John did, amongst the Company of heaven, and, with the eye of the Spirit, see among the golden candle-sticks the Son of Man.
- iii. Being in the Spirit on Sunday must depend on our preparation during the week for our Communion.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the weekly festival; pray that you may prepare better to keep it; resolve to be present every Sunday at the Holy Eucharist and to seek there a revelation of heaven.

FIRST MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me, even so send* I you."*—S. John, *xx.*, 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in these words solemnly giving to the Apostles their Commission.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use all the gifts of the Church.

Consider some of the powers of CHRIST, which by these words were committed to His Church in a spiritual form for ever.

I. JESUS came to raise the dead; to the Church He has given power in the Sacrament of Baptism to raise the dead soul, imparting to it the principle of life. *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them."*—S. Matt., *xxviii.*, 19. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."*—S. Mark, *xvi.*, 16.

II. JESUS came to heal the sick, and cleanse the leper; to the Church "He has given power and commandment to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins."

i. This is the one gift particularly specified in this Commission: *"Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"*—*vv.* 22–23; (also S. Matt., *xvi.*, 19; *xviii.*, 18).

ii. We find S. Paul distinctly claiming, and exercising this power. *"For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST."*—II. Cor., *ii.*, 10 (also II. Cor., *v.*, 18–21).

iii. The power of the Precious Blood in Absolution cleanses the soul from the leprosy of sin, heals it of all sickness (I. S. John, *i.*, 7).

III. JESUS came to feed the fainting multitude; to the Church He has given the Commission to feed His Sheep (S. John, *xxi.*, 15–18); and in the Holy Eucharist, she feeds her children with the Bread of Life.

IV. JESUS came to preach the Gospel; to the Church he has given the charge to go *"into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"*—S. Mark, *xvi.*, 15; and He has proclaimed her the Authorized Teacher of the things of GOD, *"if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"*—S. Matt., *xviii.*, 17.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for our Lord's gifts to His Church; pray that you may use faithfully all the means of grace; resolve to be more careful in preparation for the Sacraments.

* For the force of these two verbs "to send" see page 98.

FIRST TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

ABSOLUTION.

"He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—S. John, xx., 22-23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD breathing on His Apostles, and giving them power to minister Absolution.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always have right dispositions for receiving this Gift.

Consider the effects of Absolution on the soul:

I. In forgiving its sin:

i. It is the especial means instituted by CHRIST for the remission of sin after Baptism, by the Sacramental application of the Precious Blood.

ii. It is the authoritative assurance of GOD's forgiveness of all our sins, "the pledge to assure us thereof" (Catechism).

iii. It is the power of resurrection from the death of sin in which we may have involved ourselves since Baptism.

II. In restoring its spiritual treasures:

i. It restores to the soul the robe of Baptismal Righteousness (it cannot of course restore innocence); the Prodigal on his return was clothed by the servants, at the Father's command, with the best robe.

ii. It restores to us all those treasures which in our past life we have laid up in heaven (S. Matt., vi., 20) but which by deadly sin have been forfeited (Ezek., xviii., 24).

iii. It infuses into the soul virtues, and especially charity, or love of GOD (S. Luke, vii., 47).

III. In bestowing upon it sacramental grace. Each Sacrament conveys two kinds of grace, habitual grace or sanctifying grace, which is the same in all; and Sacramental grace, which is the peculiar grace of the Sacrament. In absolution it is:

i. The loosing of the soul from the chains of sin; "though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us" (English Prayer-Book).

ii. Light to know our sins, and so self-knowledge; this results from the dispersion of the clouds of sin.

iii. A special grace to resist our own peculiar temptations.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the many "benefits of absolution" (English Prayer-Book); pray for grace to use them well; resolve to coöperate with these graces.

FIRST WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

"And, behold there was a great earthquake : for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."—S. Matt., xxviii., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angel rolling back the stone from the tomb as the morning began to dawn:

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the stone of your sins may be so rolled away, that the Sun of Righteousness may dawn on your life.

I. Consider that Resurrection is always accompanied by a commotion and upheaving of nature.

i. In our LORD'S Resurrection there was the earthquake.

ii. At the General Resurrection of the last day there will be a great disturbance of the powers of nature.

iii. In the spiritual Resurrection of the sinner at the time of his first great turning to GOD in penitence, there is an intense struggle, an earthquake, as it were, in his whole nature.

II. Consider that the power of Resurrection is always GOD'S power.

i. JESUS rose by His own power, He needed not that the angel should roll back the stone.

ii. So GOD forgives the sinner by His own power, for "*Who can forgive sins but God only.*"

iii. Yet the angel was sent to roll back the stone, and GOD does send His messenger in the person of the priest of the Church to pronounce to the sinner the Absolution of his sins; just as in the Resurrection of Lazarus, our LORD told His Apostles to loose Him from the grave-clothes, after that, by His own divine power, He had raised him from the dead.

III. Consider the import of the rolling away of the stone by the angel.

i. It was typical of the rolling away of sin, hence of the Absolution declared by GOD'S Priest.

ii. It was the assurance to our LORD'S Disciples that He had risen; so Absolution is to the sinner the assurance that his sins are rolled away, and that he has risen.

iii. It was "*as it began to dawn*" (v. i.), so Absolution is the dispersion of the darkness, and the joyful shining of the bright light of GOD'S favour on the sinner's soul.

Affections.—Gratitude to GOD for the assurance given to the soul in Absolution; pray that you may seek the grace with right dispositions; resolve to accept the earthquake in one's nature, which a thorough repentance necessitates.

FIRST THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

JESUS THE PEACEMAKER.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you."—S. John, xx., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD bestowing upon His Church the gift of Peace.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may possess this Easter gift which passeth all understanding.

I. Who comes? JESUS the Peacemaker. Consider:

i. He who said "*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*"—S. Matt., v., 9.

ii. He who is the Prince of Peace, whose birth was heralded by the angelic proclamation, "*On earth peace.*"

iii. He who through the direst strife, on the battle-field of Calvary, won the gift of peace.

II. To whom does He come? To a poor soul surrounded on all sides by war, wearied with strife, and longing for peace.

III. Why does he come? To make peace. To be our peace (Eph., ii., 14).

i. To make peace between our souls and God, "*Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.*"—II. Cor., v., 18.

ii. To make peace between us and our fellow men, for He has given us a new commandment, that we love one another.—S. John, xiii, 34.

iii. To make peace in our own soul, that He may fill us with Himself in the Holy Eucharist. "*He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.*"—Ps., cxlvii., 14.

Affections.—Gratitude for the gift of the Holy Eucharist; pray that you may have courage to wage war with your foes, that you may have peace in your borders and so be prepared for the Corn of Heaven; resolve to take some special foe to conquer in the strength of this Communion.

FIRST FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE SIGNS OF THE PASSION.

"And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His Hands and His Side."—S. John, xx., 20.

PRELUDE I. Contemplate our LORD exhibiting to his Apostles the marks of His Passion.

PRELUDE II. Pray that you may know not only the power of His Resurrection, but also the fellowship of His sufferings, as manifested in your own life.

I. Consider the identity of the resurrection-body and that we now have :

i. The risen body is a spiritual body, but it is the same body, having a real continuity of material existence ; though what will be its relation to the material world we cannot tell. The fact of our LORD'S eating after His Resurrection shows a relationship to exist.

ii. The risen body will exist under different conditions from our present bodies ; it will be glorified, impassible, agile, as shown in our LORD'S becoming present in a room, the doors of which were closed.

iii. The continuity of existence with our present body is to be recognized in the marks of the wounds exhibited by our LORD to His Apostles after His Resurrection.

II. Consider the purpose of these glorified scars in the Body of CHRIST.

i. A sign and trophy of the victory over sin and death, won by the Passion.

ii. In the day of Judgment those wounds will convict the lost of their sin and ingratitude. Of their sin, for they shall look on Him whom they pierced (Rev. i., 7) ; their sins caused those wounds. Of their ingratitude, that after He had borne all this to take away their sins, they yet rejected His offered grace.

iii. In eternity they will be the marks of His love for His redeemed.

III. Consider how by the wounds of His Passion our LORD appeals to our Faith, Hope, and Love.

i. To our Faith ; on Easter-day, amid the joys of His Resurrection, He first shows the marks of His Passion, to remind us that it is by the Cross only that we can reach the Crown.

ii. To our Hope ; our LORD is displaying those wounds before His Father, and pleading their merits for us ; hence, we are inspired with hope and led to persevere in prayer, which is the exercise of hope.

iii. To our Love ; those scars are the witness of the greatness of His love for us, of what He bore for us ; hence, we are called to show in like manner the greatness of our love for Him by bearing willingly our Crosses.

Affections.—Realize that Heaven will show the results of our life here ; make acts of faith, and hope, and love ; resolve to bear some special cross, as a witness of your love for CHRIST.

FIRST SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."—Ezekiel xxxvii., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate this vision of Ezekiel, the Valley of Dry Bones.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the life-giving breath of the Holy Ghost. Consider this vision as a type of the three resurrections of man.

I. The Resurrection of Baptism. Consider :

- i. The state of the unbaptized, dry bones of humanity without the breath of life.
- ii. The bones may be collected together (vv. 7-8) and clothed by nature, but natural gifts cannot convey life ; the operation of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Life-Giver, alone can accomplish this.
- iii. After the Breath came into them they lived, an exceeding great army (v. 10), the great army of the soldiers of JESUS, made His soldiers in Baptism, the Church Militant.

II. The Resurrection of Absolution: Consider :

- i. The sinner's state, who has fallen from the grace of Baptism, slain by the malice and craft of Satan, cut off from God, dry bones indeed.
- ii. The helplessness of man of himself to recover the lost grace : the world can restrain the manifestation of sin, can clothe the corpse-like soul with its own gaudy vestments, but it can do nothing to free man from the bondage of sin, to cure the moral evil, it cannot revive the spark of life.
- iii. The army of the Saints, whom S. John saw (Rev., vii., 13-14) were those who had "*washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" The Holy Spirit had breathed in them with Sacramental power, and restored to them life.

III. The Resurrection of Glory. Consider :

- i. The death of the body laid in the earth, its complete disintegration, dry bones, and a few handfuls of dust.
- ii. The inability of the world with all its science to restore life.
- iii. The Breath of GOD at the general resurrection, and then, the glorious army of heaven !

Affections.—Realize the power of the Holy Ghost in every resurrection ; pray Him ever to raise you when you fall ; resolve to use all means of resurrection.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE LOVE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."—S. John, x., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Good Shepherd giving up His life on the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater love for Him Who so loved you.

I. Consider this love as manifested in the history of the Good Shepherd :

i. In eternity: *"I have loved thee with an everlasting love."*—Jer., xxxi., 3. Before I had any other existence, in eternity I had My place in His love.

ii. In His life on earth: every act of those thirty-three years was an act of love for me.

iii. In His death on the Cross: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* He laid down His life for me.

II. Consider this love as manifested in my life :

i. In seeking me: when I was wandering in the wilderness of this world, He sought me, and brought me to His fold.

ii. In defending me: when the wolf attacked me, He was near to defend me; in the many dangers which have threatened but have not befallen me, in the many temptations which have assaulted but have not overcome me, JESUS has been my Defender.

iii. In feeding me: In this famine-stricken world I must have starved, or poisoned myself with the noxious weeds the world offered, had not the Good Shepherd fed me with the Bread of Life, His own Body. Other shepherds feed upon their flock, the Good Shepherd gives himself to be the Food of His sheep.

III. Consider the reciprocity which this love demands :

i. We must obey Him: *"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."*—S. John, xiv., 15.

ii. We must be willing to suffer with Him: *"That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings."*—Phil., iii., 10.

iii. We must love one another: *"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."*—I. S. John, iii., 16.

Affections.—Gratitude for all the acts of love which JESUS has done for you; pray that you may realize more deeply, and reciprocate more truly this love; resolve on some act of charity to CHRIST'S poor as an exercise of your love.

SECOND MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him."—S. John, x, 4.

PRELUDE I. Contemplate the Eastern Shepherd at the head of his flock leading them forth.

PRELUDE II. Pray that you may have grace faithfully to follow the Good Shepherd.

I. Consider why CHRIST goes before His Sheep.

i. To enable us to exercise free will; we cannot be driven into heaven, we must go there of our own will.

ii. To show us the way, and to experience, and so break the force, of every danger and difficulty in our way.

iii. That we may follow; if He stood still, we could not follow; it is a law of His dealings with His sheep, that He goes before, that they may follow, *i. e.*, that they may have a real fellowship in His acts." "*Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.*" —I. Peter, ii, 21.

II. Consider CHRIST putting forth (casting out), His own sheep. (The word *ἐκβάλλη* implies violence.)

i. They are cast out *from* the world and *by* the world.

ii. The violence of the act, "*the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*"—S. Matt., xi, 12.

iii. The angels dragging Lot out of Sodom well typifies this. Has there been this wrench in our lives?

I. Consider the example of CHRIST.

i His example was one of the many rich legacies He left to the world, to us; are we using it?

ii. Every act of His life was a law for us to conform our lives to.

iii. We are to look at His life, and to copy this pattern on the canvas of our lives.

Affections:—Gratitude for the legacy of example left by Christ; pray that you may follow it more closely; resolve to conform some act or habit of your life more closely to His.

SECOND TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."—S. John, x., 14.

PRELUDE I. Contemplate our LORD from the Cross beholding each sheep of His Fold.

PRELUDE II. Pray that you may know the Good Shepherd.

I. Consider the individuality of CHRIST's knowledge of His sheep.

i. *"He calleth His own sheep by name"* (v. 3).

ii. On the Cross each sheep was before His dying eyes, as individually as though He died for it alone.

iii. Before the throne, now, each is individually remembered in His great work of Intercession; as Aaron of old bore upon his breastplate the names of the tribes of the children of Israel; so does our true HIGH-PRIEST bear now upon His Heart, the names of His children.

II. Consider the fulness of His knowledge:

i. He knows all my weaknesses, trials and sorrows.

ii. He knows all my temptations, all my sins.

iii. He knows all my good desires, all my needs; Can I say like S. Peter: *"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."*

III. Consider the reciprocity of this knowledge:

i. *"And am known of mine;" "they know His voice"* (v. 4).

ii. The difference between *knowing about* CHRIST and *knowing* CHRIST. How many a theologian, who has grasped clearly, and spoken eloquently of the truths of Christianity, will stand aghast when for the first time he sees CHRIST.

iii. This knowledge is life eternal; *i. e.*, to know CHRIST not merely theoretically, but in the experience of the soul's life, is indeed to live.

Affections.—Joy and confidence at the Good Shepherd's knowledge of you; pray that by the help of the Holy Spirit you may know Him better; resolve to seek in meditation to know His Voice.

SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—S. John, x., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Good Shepherd dying to give life to His flock.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may fulfil His purpose for you.

I. Consider that GOD has a purpose for us :

- i. GOD's purpose for us originally, when He created Adam in a state of perfection, He created him for Himself and for Heaven.
- ii. That original purpose was hindered by sin.
- iii. To accomplish this purpose JESUS came and died. The greatness of this sacrifice should lead us to realize the greatness of GOD's purpose for us.

II. Consider GOD's purpose for me as an individual :

- i. He loved me and gave Himself for me that I might have *life*.
- ii. The life He would impart to me is not that life *which I live* in common with the world ; but that life *by which alone I live* ; and which I have by virtue of my union with Him.
- iii. The relation which these two lives bear to one another is the relation of a scaffold to the great structure, the building of which it is intended to further ; how sad if I spend all my life in erecting the scaffold, and, when at the last, that is taken down, nothing be left.

III. Consider some consequences of this purpose :

- i. The Good Shepherd has come to give me life by the sacrifice of His own, and I must make some sacrifice of myself in order to receive it.
- ii. He has come to give it me *more abundantly* ; am I satisfied with a mere sentimental conception of what this life may be ? or, am I possessing it in all its fulness, and developing it in all its power by the use of every appointed means ?
- iii. Not to have this life is to refuse the greatest gift ; to render useless all that the Good Shepherd has done for me, to reject Him.

Affections.—Realize that GOD has a purpose for you ; examine how you are fulfilling what you think to be His purpose for you ; pray for light to know this purpose ; resolve to be more earnest in endeavouring to carry it out.

SECOND THURSDAY AFTER EASTER

JESUS OUR SHEPHERD.

"I am the Good Shepherd."—S. John, x., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Good Shepherd visiting His sheep in the Holy Eucharist.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to use His Gifts.

I. Who comes? The Good Shepherd. Consider :

- i. He laid down His life for His sheep, that they might know His love.
- ii. He knows His sheep by name, therefore they can trust themselves in His Hands.
- iii. He goes before His sheep that they may be able to follow.

II. To whom does He come? To one who knows his dependence on the Shepherd; to one who has often erred from the fold; to one who realizes his defenceless condition.

III. Why does He come? That I may lack nothing :

- i. To give me life by participation in His own life.
- ii. To lead me into the way of righteousness.
- iii. To supply all my needs in the green pastures of His Church.

Affections.—Confidence in the Good Shepherd; joy in following Him; pray that He may indeed convert your soul and lead you forth in the paths of righteousness; resolve to obey His voice.

SECOND FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE VOICE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"And the Sheep hear His Voice."—S. John, x., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John at Patmos hearing the Voice.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a hearing ear.

I. Consider some of the properties of this Voice:

i. Its power of making itself known; the Sheep know this Voice; around may be louder calls, yet the Voice of JESUS makes itself known to His Sheep amid them all.

ii. Its power of increase; at first a still, small voice, a whisper, but growing till it fills and thrills the whole being; the danger is that it may be drowned at first by the voices of the world.

iii. Its power of attraction; it is the Voice of one who goes before, it draws after it all CHRIST'S Sheep, they follow Him.

II. Consider some of the calls of this Voice:

i. It calls us to follow through the mazes of the dying world.

ii. It speaks to us from Heaven, and says: "*Come up hither.*"

iii. It tells us to trust ourselves entirely to its guiding; it is the Voice of one who loves us, and has claims on our confidence.

III. Consider some of the responsibilities this involves:

i. It needs a trained ear; we must all cultivate the faculty of spiritual hearing by meditation.

ii. It is always speaking; we need to form a habit of listening; at every choice we have to make listening for the Voice to say: "*This is the way.*"

iii. It reveals to us our vocation; to hear and not to obey is to forfeit the place in Heaven to which it is calling us.

Affections—Joy at hearing the Voice; pray for a greater capacity of hearing it; resolve to listen more in meditation.

SECOND SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP.

"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."
—S. John, x., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate CHRIST as the Door of Heaven, which opens as we gaze on it, and discloses the glories of His Kingdom.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in entering in by that Door.

I. Consider CHRIST as the Door :

- i. Of the Fold, *i. e.*, in Baptism we pass through Him into our inheritance.
- ii. Of life; outside of Him is nothing but death; through Him we pass to the true life.
- iii. Of Heaven; "when He had overcome the sharpness of death He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." He, Himself, is that opened Door.

II. Consider the entering in by the Sacraments, for "*Christ is all.*" (Col, iii., 11.)

- i. By Baptism, and Absolution; when we first enter, and when we return after having strayed from the Fold.
- ii. By Confirmation.
- iii. But chiefly by the Holy Eucharist; there we find that pasture which He has promised.

III. Consider the entering in by meditation :

i. Meditation is the fellowship of the soul with GOD, gazing at the door till it opens, and we pass through it; as on the one hand meditation is listening for the voice, so on the other is it the exercise of the spiritual sight, gazing through CHRIST on the things of heaven.

ii. What we may see; think of all S. John saw, but chiefly, the Vision of JESUS.

iii. *Going out.* After we have seen the things of heaven, going out to our work in the world, as Moses came down from the Mount, with some rays of the glory of CHRIST still radiant upon us. And this going in to see the vision, and going out to our work in the world, must make up our life here.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and love; pray that you may have your spiritual sight strengthened; resolve to be patient in your meditations in waiting for the Vision.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims."—I. S. Peter, ii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a pilgrim on his journey.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of detachment.

I. Consider the outer life of the pilgrim :

- i. His garb and appearance tell his calling.
- ii. His body is disciplined by toil and hardship.
- iii. His possessions are as few and as light as possible, that they may not impede him in his journey.

II. Consider the inner life of the pilgrim :

- i. His thoughts are fixed on Home, he longs for the pilgrimage to be over.
- ii. His little interest in things around, and countries through which he passes.
- iii. All his desire is to reach the end ; he values all things as they help or hinder this desire.

III. Consider some of the dangers of the pilgrim :

- i. That he may be tempted to give up his pilgrimage and to settle, and become a citizen of some foreign land.
- ii. That without actually doing this he may waste his time, and so perhaps never reach the end of his pilgrimage.
- iii. There are enemies which threaten his very life in the countries through which he has to pass ; the Christian has especially the three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Affections.—Realization of our exile here, that this is not our home ; pray that you may keep yourself detached from the things of earth ; resolve to press forward on your pilgrimage.

THIRD MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE SORROWS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.—S. John. xvi., 20-22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the joyous reunion after long separation, of two who are very dear to one another.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so bear your sorrows that they may be indeed the seeds of future joys.

Sorrow is the lot of all here below : how soon the childish face that shines with smiles is bathed in tears ; how soon upon the memory is ploughed the recollection of past woes ; but the Christian life, while it has its own joys, has sorrows of a special kind.

I. Consider some elements of Christian sorrow :

i. The kindling of good desires, the forming of mighty purposes for the glory of God, and then defeat again and again.

ii. When a love, so all absorbing that we have never known anything like it, has been conceived in our hearts, the love of God ; when in our Meditation, at our Communion, we have made a great act of self-oblation, and given ourselves to Him ; and we go forth, and night comes at length, and self-examination, and there is the consciousness of complete failure, and this goes on again and again till the love of God becomes our agony.

iii. When this love of God has led to its necessary result, the love of what God loves, the love of souls ; and we see sin destroying God's image in those for whom Jesus died, and we try to bring those souls to CHRIST in penitence, and we are disappointed, this is Christian sorrow.

II. Consider some elements of the world's joy :

i. Its most intoxicating joys are those things which should cause us to weep and lament.

ii. Its most innocent joys are those things which last but the day of the world, and with the world come to nothing.

iii. Its joys have no elements of endurance, but pass away with the world, unless perhaps they become food for eternal remorse.

III. Consider the end of Christian sorrow :

i. It shall be turned into joy ; Christian sorrow contains in itself the elements of all future joy, as these weak bodies of ours shall be changed like unto the glorious Body of our LORD and KING ; so our tears and sorrows, like those of the Man of Sorrows, shall be turned into joy.

ii. Heaven will not be a new creation at the last day, but the summing up of our life here ; how sad if we have nothing to be turned into joy, nothing to be glorified ; our tears of Christian sorrow are the seeds of the joys of Heaven, for "*they that sow in tears shall reap in joy* ;" we cannot reap what we have not sown.

iii. "*I will see you again, . . . and your joy no man taketh from you.*" The supreme element of our joy, the Vision of God ; and the knowledge that our joy is eternal.

Affections.—Realize the need of mourning, if we are to be comforted ; pray for resignation to the pains of life ; resolve to sorrow more for sin.

THIRD TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE LAW OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.

"A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me."—S. John, xvi., 16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD manifesting Himself to the soul.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to prize His visits.

In the Gospel for this week we have, in these words, a great law of the risen life; the law of CHRIST'S presence; that while in one sense He is with us always, in another the law of His presence is one of coming and going; and this for our good, a part of the discipline of our LORD'S training.

I. Consider some reasons why JESUS seems to go.

i. As clouds are as necessary as the sunshine in nature that fruit may be produced; so in the kingdom of grace, it must not be all the sunshine of our LORD'S conscious presence.

ii. As winter is the season for the concentration of the forces of the tree in the roots, before the new effort of growth in the next spring; and summer is only the manifestation of the winter's work, so in the spiritual life.

iii. Coldness, desolation, struggle, develope our faculties far more than joy and brightness; that is, if we are faithful in enduring.

II. Consider some of the things JESUS designs to teach us by this law:

i. To prize His visits, and to welcome Him when He comes.

ii. To trust Him when absent, and to wait for Him.

iii. To follow Him when He departs.

III. Consider why He leaves us:

i. That during His absence we may practice what He has taught us, to test thus whether we are ready for more of His gifts.

ii. Though He seems to leave us, He still cares for us, and supplies with all the grace we need.

iii. That we may set our affections on things above, and realize that this is not our home; if we could have all joy here, we should not long for heaven.

Affections.—Gratitude for the many gifts of our LORD; pray Him to help you to follow Him; resolve to use well times of spiritual joy, and of spiritual desolation.

THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE SHORTNESS OF TIME.

"What is this that He saith, A little while?"—S. John, xvi., 18

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles talking over these words.

PRELUDE 11.—Pray that you may so use the little while of time that you may enjoy the great while of eternity.

What is life but a little while? May not man say these words of himself and all he has, "*A little while, and ye shall not see me.*"

I. Consider the little while of opportunities :

i. For a little while the streams of grace flow on in their appointed channels, within man's reach, but the little while will soon be past, and all opportunities of grace gone forever.

ii. For a little while does man's school-day here last, in which he may learn of God, and God's revelation to man ; learn to die, and so to live eternally ; but soon that school will break up, and he will have to practice what he has learnt.

II. Consider the little while of struggle :

i. A little while of endurance of temptation ; assaulted in every part of the nature, the struggle growing perhaps fiercer ; take heart, the devil has great wrath, because he knows he has but a *short* time (Rev., xii., 12).

ii. A little while of bearing the Cross ; so heavy sometimes that it seems as though our strength could not last ; the night of sorrow so long, that it seems as though the morning would never break, but it is but a little while, and the Cross shall be changed for the Crown.

III. Consider the little while of paradise :

i. Exercising hope by waiting.

ii. Learning there to love.

IV. Consider the eternity of heaven depending upon all these little whiles of earth.

Affections.—Realize the shortness of life ; pray for patience ; resolve to improve some present opportunity.

THIRD THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

JESUS OUR FRIEND.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."—S. John, xv., 14-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD speaking these words to His Apostles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may prove your friendship by keeping His commandments.

I. Who comes? Jesus our friend, who has said, I call you not servants but friends. Consider the proofs of friendship;

i. Mutual confidence: He has confided to us the Truth, how do we prize this confidence?

ii. Identity of interest: He has said that every act of love shown to us He considers as done to Himself. *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."*—S. Matt., xxv., 40.

iii. Trust: He has made us His stewards, entrusting all to our care; entrusting even Himself to us; how true have we been to this trust?

II. To whom does He come? To one who has been very untrue to Him, in whose house He has often been wounded, but who desires by His grace to be more faithful.

III. Why does He come? To seek our friendship, to assure us of forgiveness for the past, of love and trust in the future.

i. We must therefore give Him our confidence tell Him all our sorrows and sins.

ii. We must make His interests in the world our own, labouring with zeal for His glory.

iii. We must trust Him generously, leaving all in His hands, and knowing that His grace is sufficient for us.

Affections.—Make acts of contrition, and love; pray that you may be more faithful; resolve to do some act for His glory.

THIRD FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

CONVERSATION.

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another." S. Luke, xxiv. 17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD asking this question of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sanctification of speech.

One of the fruits of the risen life ought to be sanctified speech, to converse always as we should wish to do if we were expecting our LORD to come and take part in our conversation; with this thought let us examine:

I. Our conversation in relation to GOD:

i. Speech was given us that with it we might glorify GOD; do we ever think of this as the end of our conversation?

ii. In speaking of the truths of the faith, is it with love or with bitterness and self-assertion?

iii. In speaking of GOD, is it always with reverence?

II. Our conversation in relation to our neighbours:

i. Do we discuss their faults, and so sin against charity?

ii. Do we enquire over-eagerly into their affairs, and so sin by wrong curiosity?

iii. Do we try to find flaws in their good actions, and so sin against justice?

III. Our conversation in relation to ourselves:

i. Do we speak of some of our faults with false humility, and so sin by dishonest pride?

ii. Do we speak of our virtues and gifts, and so sin against modesty?

iii. Do we speak only of those things which are interesting to us, and so sin by selfishness?

Affections.—Realize the Presence of JESUS as the witness of all our conversations; pray, "*Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.*"—Ps., cxli, 3; resolve, as an act of self-restraint, to keep silence at some certain time.

THIRD SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE FACE OF JESUS.

"Seek ye My Face: Thy Face, Lord, will I seek."—Ps. xxvii., 8.

"A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me."—S. John, xvi., 16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles gazing with love on the Face of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more earnestness in seeking the sight of that Face.

I. Consider what a face is :

- i. It is that part of the human form which possesses a fascination and interest quite independent of its beauty of feature ; and which invites study, and affords food for contemplation, which are inexhaustible ; why ?
- ii. Because it is the book where we may read the history of a life ; it bears the impress of character, that is, the summing up of all the past, it is for those who can read it a revelation of what we are.
- iii. Because it is the index which records the workings of an immortal soul ; it carries the lines which have been traced gradually by the development of the virtues and vices of our soul's life.

II. Consider the Face of JESUS :

- i. Perfect beauty of form and feature, lighted up by the perfect beauty of a sinless soul, glorified by the radiance of Divinity.
- ii. The history of a human life of love, unmarred by any failure ; the lines of a perfect character, the marks of suffering, sacrifice, and self-control.
- iii. The index of a soul in which was perfectly and harmoniously developed every virtue.

III. Consider when we shall really see that Face :

- i. At the moment of death, at the particular judgment, we shall see Him, and see how worthy of our love He is.
- ii. The recollection of that Face will be the growth of our hope and love in Paradise, or
- iii. The despair, remorse, and woe of eternity in hell.

Affections.—Desire to see GOD ; pray for purity of heart that you may see Him even now ; resolve to seek the Face of JESUS in the exercise of Meditation.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THINGS EXPEDIENT.

"But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."—S. John, xvi, 6-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles sorrowing at the news of their LORD'S departure.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to welcome those things which are expedient though painful.

I. Consider how many things there are which fill our hearts with sorrow which are expedient for us.

i. Temptation : how the danger of yielding, and the struggle necessary to resist, fills us with fear ; and yet temptation is expedient for us (S. James, i).

ii. Trial : how many sorrows we have in life ; even our greatest happiness is clouded by the shadow of approaching grief, and yet it is expedient for us that we should bear the Cross, for without it, we cannot be CHRIST'S disciples.

iii. Bereavement : how hard to lose those we love, for them to go away ; and yet it is expedient often that the idol of our life should be taken away to make room in our hearts for God.

II. Consider why it was expedient that our LORD should go to the FATHER :

i. That we might follow Him there, and in our Father's House find our Home.

ii. That we might not become citizens of earth ; if CHRIST had stayed here, how could the Apostles have gone before Him to heaven.

iii. That we might have the HOLY GHOST the Comforter.

III. Consider some reasons why it was expedient that we should have the HOLY GHOST.

i. That we might have CHRIST as our possession ; with the Apostles He lived as their Master and Lord, but there was no possibility of their being brought into any more intimate relation, but by the operation of the HOLY GHOST. By His work in the Sacraments they were to be made members of CHRIST. CHRIST departs that the HOLY GHOST may come ; the HOLY GHOST comes that He may bring CHRIST to the soul.

ii. That He might guide us into all truth (v. 13). Before His descent how feeble was the Apostles' grasp of truth.

iii. That He might convince us of our sins (v. 8), and so lead us to penitence.

Affections.—Realize that the sorrows of earth contain the elements of future joy ; pray for grace to bear the Cross ; resolve to seek the help of the Comforter in your especial trial.

FOURTH MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

UNPLEASANT TRUTHS.

"But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth."—S. John, xvi., 6-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD before Pilate, telling him the truth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace to love the truth.

I. Consider the rarity of perfect truthfulness:

i. We often do not tell others unpleasant truths, when we ought to, for fear of displeasing them.

ii. We do not like others to tell us some truths because they wound our vanity.

iii. Too often when an unpleasant truth is told, it is not because it is expedient, but to gratify malice, not "*speaking the truth in love*."—Eph., iv., 15.

II. Consider our LORD's rule in telling people unpleasant truths:

i. When it filled the Apostles with sorrow. He told them the truth of His departure, *because it was expedient for them*; so He revealed in plain terms to His Church the reality of Hell.

ii. When telling some of His disciples a truth which caused them to leave Him, and which they could not accept (S. John, vi., 61 and 66), He did not shrink from it.

iii. When telling a truth which brought pain and death on Him, He boldly spoke it. (S. Matt. xxvi., 64).

III. Consider the importance of Truth.

i. What a different world this would be if all spoke the truth; the principal feature of this world is its unreality.

ii. What a different religion ours would be, if we were perfectly sincere in it.

iii. What a change Eternity will be,—awakening to a life of absolute truth, after the deceitfulness and unreality of this world; we must prepare for this by cultivating the virtue of truth now.

Affections.—Realize the importance of Truth; pray for sincerity; resolve in some especial point to be real.

FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER EASTER. :

THE STRUGGLE OF LIFE.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—S. Luke, xiii., 24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a runner straining every nerve to win the race.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to persevere in the struggle for life.

I. Consider the force of these words:

i. "*Strive*" (*ἀγωνίζεσθε*), the same word as used by the HOLY GHOST to describe our LORD's struggle in Gethsemane. (S. Luke, xxii., 44; and in I. Cor. ix., 25); it signifies a struggle in which every power is put forth; does this in any real sense describe our spiritual life?

ii. "*To enter in.*" It is not enough for us to come to the gate, we must actually enter in; many come to it, and either pass by or stay on the outside; if we are left outside, it will be in darkness and death; with the foolish virgins, they reached the gate, but it was only to knock in vain.

iii. "*At the strait gate.*" There is only one door by which we can enter CHRIST's Kingdom; and that is narrow, so narrow that we must reduce ourselves by mortification, make ourselves small by humiliation, in order to enter; we cannot carry any of the world through that gate with us; we cannot get through with all our sins.

II. Consider the contrast in the Text:

i. Those who *seek* and those who *strive*; every one wishes to enter, but how few will go through the needful struggle.

ii. To enter in; many realize something of the glories of that Kingdom, of which the strait gate is the only entrance; and hope, and even expect, to find themselves in it some day.

iii. But they are seeking by some other way than the narrow way, by some other door than the strait gate; they are trying to do what is impossible.

III. Consider the purposes of this struggle, in which is summed up our life here:

i. Development; as the athlete's muscles are developed by the struggle, and the strength so gained is the result of painful training; so in the arena of life are the faculties of our glorified nature to be developed by striving.

ii. Humility; as we often meet with failure and defeat, we are to learn to know ourselves; and self-knowledge, if it is real, must lead to humility.

iii. Victory at the last; not an easy victory, but won after honest struggle, and faithful fighting; the result of which is peace for evermore.

Affections.—Realize the danger of deceiving ourselves about our spiritual life, and being contented with seeking instead of striving; pray for strength for the conflict; resolve often to examine yourself on this text.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

SWIFT TO HEAR.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."—S. James, i., 19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a soul at the judgment, giving an account of its sins of word.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sanctification of speech.

The first clause of the sentence is the means by which we may attain to the two latter clauses ; if we are swift to hear, we shall be slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Consider now each clause

I. Swift to hear : what ?

i. The Voice of GOD in conscience ; this needs to be cultivated by a habit of swift obedience, acting always on the first impulse of conscience.

ii. The Voice of GOD in the Church ; a habit of obedience to authority, a thorough realization of the need of discipline.

iii. The Voice of GOD in the Bible ; a habit of applying Holy Scriptures to ourselves, and this is to be acquired by the exercise of meditation.

II. Slow to speak :

i Our words are a revelation of ourselves ; JESUS was GOD, and it was witnessed by His foes, "*Never man spake like this man.*"—S. John. vii., 46.

ii. Our words, to a very great extent, are the instrument of our influence upon other souls ; it was by the power of speech that our LORD was pleased to wield His supremacy over men ; if our speech conveys the influence of an unsanctified heart, it quite spoils the effect of any good actions. (S. James, i., 26).

iii. We know that we shall have to give a strict account of our words (S. Matt., xii., 36) ; how watchful we should be ! if we were more swift to hear God's voice, we should be more slow to speak.

III. Slow to wrath :

i. How common are the sins of irritability, impatience, and the various forms of anger. What place have they in our life ?

ii. How much misery this sin brings, both to ourselves and to others.

iii. If we listened more for God's voice, if we were swift to hear the warnings of conscience, could we be so often angry ?

Affections.— Make an act of contrition for all your sins of anger ; pray for an obedient ear ; resolve to watch more carefully your words.

FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

JESUS OUR STRENGTH.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."
—Heb., ii., 18

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in the solitude of the wilderness.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in all temptations you may flee to Him for succour.

I. Who comes? Jesus, the tempted one. Consider:

i. The reality of His Temptation: He was "*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"—Heb., iv., 15.

ii. The real pain of His Temptation: "*He suffered being tempted;*" His Agony in Gethsemane, when He said to His Apostles, "*Pray that ye enter not into temptation;*" and prayed Himself, saying, "*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me.*"

iii. The real victory He won over temptation: "*For the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.*"—S. John, xiv., 30. "*I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.*"—Rev., iii., 21.

II. To whom does He come? To one who is sorely tempted, and needs His help to resist the tempter.

III. Why does He come? Of His love to succour us, in the Blessed Sacrament to supply that grace which we need.

i. To point out the way of escape, that we may be able to bear our temptations (I. Cor., x., 13).

ii. To enlighten us that we may recognize temptation under the various disguises in which it meets us.

iii. To strengthen us to win the victory, when we have to fight with temptation. "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"—Phil., iv., 13.

Affections.—Gratitude to our LORD for having proved and broken the force of every temptation; pray for grace always to resist the first assault of temptation; resolve to watch against what you know to be your special temptation.

FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE DAYBREAK OF ETERNITY.

"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore."—S. John, xxi., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing on the firm shore, the Apostles in the boat on the restless sea.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be so faithful during the night of time in the toils of earth, that in the daybreak of eternity the Vision of JESUS may greet your weary eyes.

We have here two contrasts, JESUS on the firm shore, and the Apostles on the tossing sea ; the night of time, and the daybreak of eternity.

I. Consider the night of time :

i. Spent on the restless sea of this world's life ; a sea which is ever threatening us with shipwreck, its calms even more dangerous than its storms.

ii. Spent in ceaseless toil ; casting our net into the ocean of time, but our labour so often ending in disappointment, our cry so often, "*I have toiled all night and taken nothing.*"

iii. The results of the night's work cannot be really seen till the morning's light reveals them ; often they cannot be drawn into the ship for us to exult over, we must wait till the shore is reached.

II. Consider the daybreak of eternity : (If we adopt the better reading, *γινόμενης* instead of *γερομένης*, we get the more vivid picture, "As the day was now in the act of breaking.")

i. The Vision of JESUS standing on the shores of eternity is the first sight of that other land which arrests the eye ; as the day breaks that will be our first joy in eternity.

ii. No more dragging of the nets into the ship, but on to the firm shore ; no longer into the ship, which itself may be wrecked, but our treasures stored up beyond the reach of storm or tempest.

iii. The one hundred and fifty-three great fishes ; the completed work of life—all finished.

III. Consider the reward of the fishermen :

i. The dangers of the deep are left for the eternal shore ; all dangers over for ever now, no more doubts or fears.

ii. They leave their toils to enter into the reward of their labours ; no more broken nets, no more disappointments, "*they rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.*"

iii. "*Come and dine ;*" they sit down with their LORD at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Affections.—Desire for the morning to come ; pray for faithfulness in labour ; resolve to examine your work in its relation to eternity.

FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

TO DAY.

"While it is called To Day."—Heb., iii., 13

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the sunset.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to use the present day. Consider that the past is beyond our reach, the future not yet in our power, the present alone is ours.

I. To day has:

- i. Its own duty; and the neglect of duty is sin.
- ii. Its own opportunity; if we lose it, it is lost for ever.
- iii. Its own grace; "*As thy days, so shall thy strength be.*"—Deut., xxxiii., 25; that grace is given to be used.

II. To day may be misused:

- i. By procrastination; putting off till to-morrow its work and its calls.
- ii. By precipitation; spending it in undue hurry and bustle, trying to crowd into it more work than belongs to it.
- iii. By sloth; doing its duties in a half-hearted way, leaving one work for another; forgetting the wise man's advice, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*"—Eccles., ix., 10.

III. To day can only be improved:

- i. By concentration; doing each thing thoroughly, and giving all the attention to it at its proper time, so meeting the multiplicity of life.
- ii. By calmness; avoiding all hurry and confusion, remembering that we cannot do more than a certain amount of work, and that it is better to do a few things well, than many things badly.
- iii. By energy; really putting all the strength God has given us into our work.

Affections.—Realize the waste of time which is always going on; pray for diligence; resolve on some one duty of the present, which you will do thoroughly.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

The ROGATION PRAYER.

"Draw me, we will run after Thee."—Cant., i., 4

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to the Apostles, as in the Gospel for to-day, *"Ask and ye shall receive."*

PRELUDE II.—Pray for guidance in your Rogationtide prayer.

We are in the position of Elisha, when he was about to lose his Master, and like him, we must perseveringly follow our Master, that we may hear Him say, *"Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee."*—II. Kings, ii., 9.

I. Consider our answer : *"Draw me."*

i. This must be our continuous prayer, that in heart and mind we may be drawn after our LORD.

ii. Dare we ask it? Yes, for we have His promise, *"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."*

iii. He, whom we have learned to love, is soon to be taken from us, as Elijah was from Elisha, and we cannot bear to think of being left alone, and so we pray Him to draw us after Him.

II. Consider what the prayer implies :

i. Our helplessness and His power.

ii. Our close connection with our LORD ; a cord uniting us strong enough to draw us ; what cord? the cord of love, *"I drew them with cords of a man, with bonds of love."*—Hosea, xi., 4.

iii. Our perfect reliance on Him ; there is no reservation as to the manner in which we are to be drawn,—through pain or sorrow, as He will.

III. Consider our promise, if the prayer be granted, *"we will run after Thee."* This implies :

i. Faith that the prayer will be answered, this an essential element of all good prayers.

ii. Confidence in the power of our LORD's grace and love : now I cannot even walk, but if Thou draw me, then I shall run. (The same idea in Ps., cxix., 32.)

iii. Correspondence of the will to grace ; I *will* run ; no prayer is efficacious without this ; it is useless praying for grace unless we mean to use it.

Affections.—Realize your need of help ; pray that your will may be strong to co-operate with God's grace ; resolve often to pray this prayer during the next three days.

ROGATION MONDAY.

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.”—S. John, xvi., 23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD in heaven receiving the prayers offered in His name, and making them efficacious by His merits.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in prayer.

I. Consider the necessity of prayer :

- i. GOD knows our needs, as He knows our sins ; but commands us to tell Him our needs, and our sins ; why does He tell us to pray ?
- ii. That we may realize our needs, and experiencing our own poverty, may seek the riches of His grace.
- iii. That we may learn our dependence on Him, and, experiencing His many gifts, may learn to love and trust Him.

II. Consider some objects of prayer :

- i. To obtain our needs ; and we have the unlimited promise, “ *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* ”
- ii. To exercise our hope ; and as hope is developed, we become more detached from the things of this world, setting our minds on the things of heaven.
- iii. To bring our wills into conformity with God's will ; resignation is an important result of prayer.

III. Consider the name of CHRIST as the condition of acceptable prayer :

- i. The name of CHRIST implies that the prayer is offered in dependence on the merits of CHRIST.
- ii. The name of CHRIST requires that the prayer should be in accordance with the will of CHRIST ; we ask too often merely to have our own will carried out, and hence our prayers remain unanswered.
- iii. The name of CHRIST implies that our prayer is for the glory of CHRIST and not merely for our own gratification.

Affections.—Realize the dignity, and necessity of prayer ; pray for some especial virtue ; resolve to realize more our LORD's mediation and work in prayer.

ROGATION TUESDAY.

PRAYER THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom., viii., 26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostle Paul in rapturous prayer; in the power of the HOLY GHOST gazing upon the Vision of heaven.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the Holy Spirit may help you in your prayers.

I. Consider some of the difficulties of our prayers:

- i. Our infirmities; leading us to desire and plead for things which would be hurtful to us.
- ii. Our ignorance as to the matter of our prayers blinding us to those things for which we ought to pray.
- iii. Our ignorance as to the manner preventing us from praying as we ought, causing us often to pray amiss.

II. Consider how the HOLY GHOST helps us:

- i. He strengthens our weakness; not helping our infirmities in the sense of helping us to obtain those things which our weaknesses lead us to desire, but strengthening those weaknesses, and enabling us to rise above them.
- ii. He enlightens our ignorance, showing us what things are to be desired, and teaching us to say in all our prayers, "Thy will be done."
- iii. He teaches us how to pray; leading us to those devotional helps in which we can best express our needs to God.

III. Consider therefore:

- i. The need of invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit at the commencement of our prayers.
- ii. The need of realizing His presence in us during our time of prayer, and His work in helping us; turning in our hour of distraction to Him for aid.
- iii. The need of cultivating the sense of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and a spirit of gratitude for His work.

Affections.—Joy at the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; pray to Him to teach you to pray; resolve to begin your prayers for a certain time with the "VENI CREATOR."

VIGIL OF THE ASCENSION.

RETROSPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her."—1. Kings, x., 4-5.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the long journey of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so prepare to keep this festival that you may see the Ascent by which our LORD JESUS CHRIST went up to the House of the LORD, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

I. Remember that nearly half the Christian year has passed, and we have followed our LORD, step by step, through His life on earth, and now we are about to celebrate His Ascension. We began our journey at Bethlehem, on Christmas-Day; if we have truly followed Him to the last, we finish it with the Apostles, on the Mount of Olives, gazing up into Heaven, striving to pierce the cloud that hides Him from our sight. (Acts, i., 9.)

II. Consider that we have seen just what the Queen of Sheba saw, only of the true Solomon, our LORD JESUS CHRIST—the reality instead of the type:

i. Like the Queen of Sheba, we have seen the Wisdom of the true Solomon, our Blessed LORD, the Wisdom of GOD. We have seen that Wisdom manifested to men, during His thirty-three years on earth. (I. Cor., i., 24.)

ii. We have seen the House that He built (Prov., ix., 1); that House of flesh, Which He took of the B. V. Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that House of flesh in Which He tabernacled amongst us (S. John, i., 14); that Temple of our flesh, Which the Jews tried to destroy, and Which, according to His promise, He raised up again on the third day (S. John, ii., 19-21); that House of our flesh Which He took up with Him to Heaven on Ascension-Day (Heb., x., 20).

iii. We have seen the Meat of His Table. On Maundy-Thursaday, His own Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, "*for My Flesh is meat indeed.*"—S. John, vi., 55.

iv. We have seen the sitting of His Servants, and attendance of His Ministers, as they (the Apostles) followed Him, in His three years' teaching and learned from Him "*the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*"—Acts, i., 3.

v. We have seen their apparel wherewith the true Solomon intued them—"the whole armour of God"—that they might "*be able to withstand in the evil day.*"—Eph., vi., 13-17.

vi. We have seen His Cupbearers (the Priests), to whom He has entrusted the Chalice of Salvation, saying "*This do ye as oft as ye drink It in remembrance of Me.*"—I. Cor., xi., 25.

III. Consider that we have now come to the last scene in our LORD's life, and to-morrow are to see the Ascent, by which He went up into the House of the LORD; and, if we have so meditated on all these mysteries of our faith, that we can think of them as things which we have heard and seen, then truly may be said of us, as of the Queen, "*there was no more spirit in her.*" After meditating on the Ascent, after being drawn up in thought to Heaven, there can be nothing more glorious, more wonderful. We have not spirit left to imagine anything more, and we can only say, with her, "*Happy are these Thy servants which stand continually before Thee,*" and hope and pray one day to be with them.

Affections.—Pray that having contemplated the Wisdom of GOD, in the different stages of His earthly life, you may have grace to practice what you have learned, and daily to endeavour yourself to follow the steps of His most holy life; colloquy with our LORD on the lessons of His life; desire that you may rightly keep the festival of the Ascension; resolve to fix your heart and mind (that is, to meditate) on Heavenly things.

ASCENSION-DAY.

THE ASCENSION.

"The ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord"—I. Kings, x., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the Queen of Sheba gazing at this Ascent.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace so to contemplate our LORD's Ascent into Heaven that you may thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell.

I. Remember our B. LORD's Ascension :

i. Consider *Heaven*, just before the Ascension, the various angel-choirs surrounding the throne of GOD ; all harmony, all peace, there ; the only trace of sin, the empty places in Heaven, from which Lucifer and his companions had fallen. The clouds, separating, as it were, earth from Heaven, like some vast curtain, far below the angels' feet.

ii. Consider *Earth* : the diseased and wasted frames of men, the withered leaves of autumn, the crumbling ruins of stately buildings ; all speaking of sin, and its wages, death ; think of the mark of sin, fixed and imprinted everywhere, in the misery, and suffering, and sorrow of earth.

iii. There is a movement among those clouds, and they roll back, and angel voices are heard, singing, "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in.*"—Ps. xxiv., 7. The angels in Heaven, as they gaze down through the opening clouds, ask, "*Who is this King of Glory ?*" Those who are accompanying the LORD JESUS in His Ascent reply, "*The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.*" It is no new King, but He, Who was from the beginning, and Who took upon Him human flesh, and now is bringing it up in triumph by that new way to Heaven ; that way, stretching from the greensward of the Mount of Olives, to the Right Hand of GOD. A new road, connecting, what before were separated, earth and Heaven.

II. Consider the effects of that Ascent on us :

i. That new way, thus opened, is never to be closed again. Ten days later, by it, the HOLY GHOST descends upon the Apostles, and the Church. The light, which shines from the glorious Wounds of the Saviour's Body, streams down, by that way, and draws up, in its bright rays, the souls of the pure on earth. Angels ascend and descend by it, as by Jacob's ladder.

ii. CHRIST points us to the empty places in Heaven, the Mansions of His Father's House, which He has prepared for us ; calls us, even now, to possess them in spirit, for "*our citizenship is in Heaven*"; calls us to enter, by that "*new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh.*"—Heb., x., 20.

iii. Consider how we are tied down to earth by affections, long fixed on things below ! how we need to have those cords loosed, by the trials and disappointments, and sorrows of life, that we may be drawn up, by the attraction of the love of CHRIST, drawn up where He is ! How each cloud, which floats across the clear blue sky, ought to remind us of our exile from Him we love ! ought to call us to endeavour, with the eye of meditation, to pierce all the clouds of earth, which hide Him from our sight !

Affections.—Colloquy with our LORD, asking Him to draw us after Him ; pray that we may have courage to cut the cords that bind us to earth, to give up those sins which weigh us down, that we may be drawn, now in heart and mind, and so dwell with Him, until He calls us, at last to be with Him in body too.

FRIDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

"*There was no more spirit in her.*"—I. Kings, x., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Picture all that the Queen of Sheba had seen (verses 4 and 5), and then, think of her feeling of astonishment.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the double portion of the Spirit of CHRIST.

I. Consider the parting of Elijah with Elisha (II. Kings, ii., 1-13):

i. Elisha, persevering, by following his master to the place of his ascension; Elijah's offer, "*Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee*"; and then, Elisha's prayer, "*Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*"

ii. "*A hard thing.*" and therefore a condition—"if thou SEE me when I am taken from thee." How this condition must have excited Elisha's most intense watchfulness!

II. Consider our LORD's parting with the Apostles:

i. They followed Him to the Mount of Olives; His promise under the same circumstances as Elijah's—"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—S. John, xvi., 24. "*It is expedient for you that I go away.*" "*I will send the Comforter unto you.*"—S. John, xvi., 7. And then, "*Greater works than these shall ye do.*"—S. John, xiv., 12. And then, after they had seen the Ascension, they had no more spirit in them, and so they went back to Jerusalem, and spent the nine days in prayer, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

ii. They *saw* the Ascent, the cloud receiving Him out of their sight; and when Pentecost came, the double portion of His Spirit came upon them, according to His most true promise; and they did even greater works, as He had foretold.

III. Consider the lesson for ourselves:

i. As the contemplation of the glories of CHRIST's Ascension, and then the thought of our sorrow, and bereavement, and exile here, together with our own utter inability of *ourselves* to follow where He has gone;—as the contemplation of this leaves no more Spirit in us, we need to wait, and pray, for the double portion of our B. LORD's Spirit.

ii. A hard thing indeed; the condition, that we should watch, that we should *see* Him ascend; yes, so to strain the eyes of our soul Heavenward, so to watch the steps of His life, in meditation, that we do, in the spirit, see Him, as the Apostles saw Him, as S. Stephen saw Him through the opened Heavens; and then, we may indeed look for that double portion of His Spirit, that Whitsun gift of the Comforter, to take of the things of CHRIST, and show them unto us, and guide us into all truth. (S. John, xvi., 13-14.)

Affections.—Desire to follow our LORD, and so pray for watchfulness; realize your own weakness, and inability to follow; and pray for the double portion of His Spirit, to comfort you in your exile here, and to guide you at last to Him in Heaven.

SATURDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

OUR JOURNEY ZIONWARD.

"And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not."—1. Kings, x., 1-2-3.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the journey of the Queen of Sheba from her own country (probably Yemen) to Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may be as faithful in persevering in our journey Heavenward as she was in coming to Solomon.

I. Ascensiontide reminds us especially of our journey to Heaven, and we have a most beautiful type and picture of this in the short history of the Queen of Sheba. Let us consider it:

i. In her own country, far away from Jerusalem, she "*heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the Name of the LORD;*" and because of what she heard she undertook the long journey to Jerusalem.

ii. In the country of our exile we have heard of the fame of the Wisdom and Love of the Son of David, our LORD JESUS CHRIST. How much have we not heard of His wisdom and love! and more, that He has invited us to come to Him! "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"—S. Matt., xi., 28. And because of what we have heard, some of us, I hope, are undertaking the hard, long journey, which is to lead us to the city of which He is King.

II. Consider the difficulties of her journey:

i. Her detachment in leaving all things behind: her crown, her kingdom, her possessions, those she loved; all but the train of servants and friends, who were ready to accompany her; all but the spices, gold and precious stones which she carried, not for herself, but, as an offering to the King.

ii. And then think of the labour, weariness, and perhaps danger, of that long journey.

iii. We, too, must learn detachment, must be willing to leave all behind, if we would undertake the journey to Heaven; all but the few chosen ones, who are journeying the same way, the narrow way; there is not room for us to carry much of the world with us in that way, only that which we desire to offer to our B. LORD—just room for ourselves, and our Cross.

iv. And then, what is the straitness of that way, in which we are "strangers and pilgrims!" What labour! what weariness! what dangers besetting us on all sides! as we come unto Him, Who alone can give us rest.

III. When she reached the King "*she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions.*" So then will it be with us, but now, it is "*through a glass darkly;*" in a mirror, by riddles; but then, "*face to face.*" "*Now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known.*"—I. Cor., xiii., 12.

Affections—Desire, by meditation, to know more of the wisdom and love of the Son of David; pray for Heavenly wisdom always to choose the right way; for more love, that we may be drawn in that way, by the cords of love; that you may have courage to face the difficulties of the journey, and grace always to persevere.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

THE REWARD OF PERSEVERANCE.

"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord."—1. Kings, x., 4-5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Queen's ecstasy, after her long journey, rewarded by gazing upon all the magnificence and glory of Solomon's kingdom, and especially upon the wonders of the Temple.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may at length attain to behold the glories of Heaven.

We have already meditated on this, as the retrospect of our LORD's life on earth, let us now consider it as the prospect of the future, the joys of Heaven.

I. Consider what the Queen saw, when, her journey ended, she reached Jerusalem: His wisdom, the house he had built, his meat, the sitting and attendance of his ministers, their apparel, his cupbearers, his ascent, the House of the LORD.

II. When, our journey ended, we reach Heaven, consider what we shall see there:

i. The wisdom of GOD, especially as manifested in the ordering of our lives and troubles here; that all we thought most hard to bear was a token of His love; that we had not one sorrow, not one trial too much. We shall realize then the truth of the saying of the widow of Tekoah, "*Neither doth GOD respect any person: yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him.*"—II. Sam., xiv., 14. We are now in banishment. It will be one of the joys of Heaven to look back, and see how, in all the interlacings of life, GOD was, by His Providence, devising the means to bring us back to Him.

ii. The house that He has built for us—"the special place my dearest LORD in love prepares for me," the mansion in the Father's house, the throne on which our name is written, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

iii. "*The meat of His Table*"—the angels' food.

iv. "*The sitting of His servants, and attendance of His ministers,*" the glorious company of the angels and saints, as they throng, in countless ranks, around the throne of GOD.

v. "*Their apparel*"—the robes made white in the Blood of the LAMB.

vi. "*His cupbearers*"—the Cherubim and Seraphim.

vii. "*The Ascent by which He went up.*" The word used here for ascent is "*olah.*" It occurs some 300 times in the Bible, and signifies a burnt-offering. The only other place where it means ascent is Ezek., xl., 26. And so the ascent of our B. LORD to the Temple of Heaven, of which Solomon's was but a type, was the ascent of a whole Burnt-Offering, holy and acceptable to GOD. It will be one of the joys of Heaven to look into the mystery of that great sacrifice, by which JESUS, not only ascended up Himself, but, opened the way for our ascent.

viii. "*The House of the LORD.*" "*The LORD GOD Almighty and the LAMB.*"—Rev. xxi., 22.

III. The Queen said to the King, "*It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.*" "*Behold, the half was not told me.*"—I. Kings, x., 6-7.

So shall we then say that the half of His Wisdom, and Goodness, and Glory, were not told us here on earth; for, "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him.*"—I. Cor., ii., 9. "*Happy are these Thy servants, which stand continually before Thee, and that hear Thy Wisdom.*"—I. Kings, x., 8. Unto which happiness, of Thy mercy, bring us, O LORD.

Affections.—Endeavour now, in all the troubles of life, to recognize the wisdom of GOD's Providence, to lay up treasure in Heaven; desire that you may one day join the angels in their services around the Throne of GOD; and, to that end, resolve to be more earnest in meditating on the things of Heaven, that you may see them even now by faith; and more fervent in your praise and worship here, that you may be prepared to take your part in the utterance of the Heavenly song hereafter.

MONDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.

"So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom."—I. Kings, x., 23-24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Solomon, on his throne, surrounded by the magnificence of his court, as a type of our B. LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so seek to the Divine Solomon now, that you may dwell in His Presence throughout eternity.

I. Consider that all the wonders and glories which the Queen of Sheba saw, and which we reviewed in our last meditation, were far surpassed by that which gave them their special interest, the glory of Solomon himself; this was the crowning joy of the pilgrim Queen; to see, not only the possessions and kingdom, but the great King himself. And so too for us, the glories of Heaven, which we have been considering, pale into insignificance, before the supreme happiness of the Beatific Vision. *"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty."*—Isaiah, xxxiii., 17. This is the unspeakable joy, in which we are to find the consummation of all desires.

i. Consider the extent of Solomon's kingdom, the obedience of his servants, and the prosperity and peace of his reign.

This is but a type of our LORD as King. *"Blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever: and all the earth shall be filled with his Majesty. Amen. Amen."*—Ps. lxxii., 19. The whole of this Psalm is a description, first of Solomon's kingdom, and then of CHRIST'S.

ii. Consider the extent of our LORD'S kingdom on earth, a mightier dominion far than Solomon's, for He claims dominion, not only over the bodies, but over the hearts of His subjects.

II. Compare Solomon's treatment of the Queen of Sheba, and of his adversaries, Hadad and Jeroboam, in the next chapter.

i. (a.) To the Queen of Sheba he gave *"all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty."*—I. Kings, x., 13.

(b.) To the others exile, banishment from their country, and his presence; Hadad, an exile with Pharaoh, and Jeroboam with Shishak, both kings of Egypt; and Egypt is a type of the slavery of Satan. (I. Kings, xi., 17-41.)

ii. (a.) So our LORD, at the last day, will give to those who have sought to the true Solomon faithfully, and who, after a long journey, have reached Him—to those, He will give to inherit the kingdom prepared for them; to sit upon a throne in His kingdom; to wear the crown which the LORD hath promised to those who love Him—to those who are faithful unto death. Solomon treated the Arabian pilgrim as a queen, treated her royally; so will our LORD treat us, if we have been faithful in our pilgrimage—treat us royally, and, if we have suffered with Him, we shall reign with Him; treat us better far than Solomon, for our LORD will call us to share His kingdom with Him, while David's Son only showed his to the Queen of Sheba.

(b.) To the others, to those who have been His adversaries here, who have rebelled against Him, and by their lives have said *"we will not have this man to reign over us,"* to those our LORD will give exile, and banishment from His Presence—*"Depart from me,"*—fugitives for ever—from Father's house, from native land, to dwell with the king of Egypt, Lucifer and his angels, in the prison-house of the realms of darkness and plague, in the everlasting fire.

III. To which class do we belong? When our journey is over, and we reach the foot of that great white Throne, the Seat of Judgment, how do we expect to be treated? What have we deserved? To see the King in His Beauty, the Beatific Vision; or to be banished for ever from His Presence?

Affections.—Pray for the spread of CHRIST'S Kingdom; desire to serve Him faithfully, and to be found His friend (S. John, xv., 14-15); pray that you may be found worthy to attain to the Beatific Vision; keep This, the supreme reward of Heaven, ever before you now.

TUESDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart."—I. Kings, x., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD JESUS CHRIST on His Altar-Throne, in the Blessed Sacrament, communing with all those faithful souls, who have rightly prepared themselves to approach Him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always make a good Communion.

I. The Holy Eucharist has a special connection with the festival of the Ascension, and is typified in this history of the Queen of Sheba. How many there are, who, like the Queen of Sheba, have heard of the fame of the Divine Solomon in the Blessed Sacrament, and yet have not come to Him there, because they would not leave their own country—the world! How many are not Communicants, not for lack of hearing of the fame of the Holy Eucharist, but because they will not make the necessary preparation!

II. Consider the preparation:

i. We must leave the country in which we live, the world, and come to Jerusalem, the Church, where our B. LORD sits on His Altar-Throne, to prove Him with hard questions—all our weary doubts and perplexities, all our sorrows, and trials, and difficulties.

ii. We must bring very much gold, and spices, and precious stones; like the wise men, gold, frankincense, and myrrh—our love, our prayers (Ps. cxli., 2), our penitence.

iii. We shall sometimes find it a hard journey; many a cold northern blast to be encountered, trying to chill us; many a rock of prejudice to be overcome, which our friends, or the world, put in our way; or, perhaps, that coldness in devotion, which is, so often, the normal state of spiritual life.

III. Consider the Communion:

i. When we reach Him, and come to make our Communion, like the Queen, only in a far more true sense, we commune with Him of all that is in our hearts; and He tells us all our questions, and helps us in all our difficulties; gives us strength to fight our battles, comes to help us to bear our cross.

ii. We pass by those approaches (verses 4 and 5) to the contemplation of His wondrous Ascent, as the one perpetual Offering; aye, and to the every-day fulfilment of the angel's promise, "*This same JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*"—Acts, i., 11—that is, in a cloud, hidden from earthly sight in the cloud of the Sacramental species; coming every day on to our Altars, to bless us, as He blessed the Apostles, when the cloud received Him out of their sight.

iii. Communion ejaculation—"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—S. Matt., xii., 42.

IV. Consider the Thanksgiving:

i. If we have made a good Communion, if we have brought our gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, we shall have reason to say, It was a true report I heard; all I heard of the power and blessing of the Divine Solomon in the Blessed Sacrament was indeed true; and, behold, the half was not told me.

ii. Happy are these Thy servants, which stand continually before Thee: those who frequent the Blessed Sacrament regularly; and why not ourselves?

iii. King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked; and so, in our Communions, does our Blessed LORD give us more than we either desire or deserve.

Affections—Desire truly to leave behind everything of the world, when you come to visit our LORD on His Altar; resolve to bring with you the gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh—never to come without preparation; pray that you may always have perfect faith in what our LORD has revealed of that great Mystery; resolve to make a very careful preparation for your next Communion, and to come with some special petition; remember, when you come, "*Behold, a Greater than Solomon is here*;" colloquy with our LORD in the Blessed Sacrament.

WEDNESDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

THE GIFTS OF SOLOMON.

"And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty."—1. Kings, x., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the gifts of Solomon to the Queen of Sheba, all her desire, and more, of his royal bounty.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that our King may give us, not all our desire, for that is not always expedient for us, but those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and, for our blindness, we cannot, ask.

I. The gifts interchanged between Solomon and the Queen :

i. Consider the gifts the Queen brought to Solomon, "*An hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones.*"—1. Kings, x., 10. In her own land, how magnificent must have seemed the treasure she had prepared, but, compared with the riches of Solomon, how must the fine gold have become dim; however, she brought it, and Solomon accepted it.

ii. Consider Solomon's return. How poor all her offerings must have seemed beside his bounty; what did he give her? Whatsoever she asked? No; more than that! All her desire? More still; of his royal bounty, he gave her; what?—that is left to our imagination.

II. The gifts of CHRIST, and of ourselves :

i. (a.) Consider the gifts we bring to CHRIST; are they our best? Do we give our gold to build His Churches; our precious stones to adorn the Holy Vessels, &c.? Some do; while others say, with Judas Iscariot, to what purpose is this waste? sell these things and give them to the poor.

(b.) But take these gifts mystically. Do we give the gold of our love to JESUS? for gold, in the Bible, typifies love. Are our prayers set forth in His sight as the incense? Do we bring the precious stones of the Christian graces? the diamond of purity, the purple sapphire of penitence? The spices seem to have been the most valuable of the Queen of Sheba's gifts, for, "*there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon,*"—verse 10. And does not this seem to tell us, that, if we cannot bring as much love as we wish, nor as many virtues, at least there need be no lack of the incense of our prayers? When we have considered the gifts we bring to CHRIST, we must, after all, say, "*silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.*"

ii. Consider our LORD's gifts to us :

(a.) All things needful for body, and soul; our daily bread, our friends; and above all that greatest gift of all, the Gift of Himself to us, in our Communion. This surely corresponds to that unnamed gift of Solomon, that he gave of his royal bounty; and under this head, all the gifts of grace.

(b.) Consider well His gifts—no prayer of ours unheard, or unanswered; every prayer, that is a prayer, fulfilled, as may be most expedient for us; and how much of His royal bounty that we never thought of asking for, far more than we did ask for, we shall never know how much, till the light of Heaven itself reveals it.

Affections.—Resolve to bring your best gifts to CHRIST, and yet "In my hand no price I bring, simply to Thy Cross I cling;" desire to pray more fervently, and more perseveringly, that your prayers may be always answered, as may be most expedient for you.

OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

"So she turned and went to her own country."—I. Kings, x., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the return journey of the Queen of Sheba.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may remember, and practice, all that you **have** seen and learned, of the True Solomon, on this festival of His Ascension.

I. Consider the return journey of the Queen of Sheba:

i. The last look at the wonders of Jerusalem, her last words with King Solomon, and then, the weary way back to her own land.

ii. To-day is your last meditation this Ascensiontide; your last look, as it were, at our LORD, in His life on earth; you hear His last words to you, what are they? "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me.*"—Acts, i., 8. Treasure them up in your heart, and then, the weary journey back, the claims of the world upon you.

II. Consider the Queen back in her own land:

i. Often thinking, often talking, of what she had heard and seen at Jerusalem; never weary of praising the wisdom and glory of Solomon. Tradition tells us that she ordered the government of her kingdom according to what she had learned from Solomon.

ii. It should be so with you, during the rest of the Christian year; no more festivals of our LORD to learn from, except, perhaps, the Transfiguration; ponder on what you have learned, and practice it; order the government of your heart and life according to the pattern which you have been contemplating, the life of JESUS. Go home, and witness of CHRIST, in your daily life and work.

iii. The Queen may have wished to stay at Jerusalem with Solomon, but she had her duties to her kingdom. So you may wish to remain, always keeping festival; always at the Blessed Sacrament, where is a Greater than Solomon; but you have the duties of the state of life to which GOD has called you; return to them, and, in your performance of them, show what you have learned from this festival.

III. Remember the duty of Thanksgiving:

Thank our Blessed LORD for all that He has taught you; for our Communion, and their fruits; for all His gifts to you; treasure them up carefully, to take away with you.

Affections.—Pray that you may keep all the good resolves you have made in this festival; like Mary, keep all these things; and ponder them in your heart; desire that in all your difficulties you may have grace to seek to the true Solomon on His Altar-Throne, in the Blessed Sacrament; and that, in Communion with Him, you may have an answer to all your questions; resolve to frequent the Holy Eucharist as much as possible; and to learn more and more of the wonders of the true Solomon, our LORD, by regular meditation; pray that in the strength of that Heavenly Food you may have a safe journey to your own dear native land, Heaven, and to the throne which there awaits you; pray for the final perseverance.

MORROW OF THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

OUR LORD'S LAST CHARGE.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me."—Acts, i., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing on the Mount of Olives, and taking leave of His disciples with these words, His last charge.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for strength, that you may fulfil this charge, and witness of CHRIST before men.

I. Consider the solemnity of the occasion, and the meaning of the words:

i. Words depend much for their force on the authority of the speaker, and the importance of the occasion. Consider that, in this case, the Speaker was our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and that they were the very last words of His life on earth. How they should be ever ringing in our ears, giving us the law of our life!

ii. *"Ye shall be witnesses of Me"*: Literally, "ye shall be My Martyrs"; ye shall show forth to the world My life, because ye are to be imitators of Me: These words, then, give us, as our vocation, the imitation of CHRIST.

II. Consider the charge as addressed to the Apostles, and to us:

i. How did the Apostles receive it? It was as though CHRIST had said to them, you have seen My life; have heard My doctrine; beheld My journeys, labours, persecutions; My Cross, Death, Resurrection; soon you shall behold also My Ascension. Go forth, and witness to the world of Me. And how? not only by preaching, but by showing forth these things in your own lives. And how did they do it? read II. Cor., xi., 23; and so S. Paul said, *"Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ,"*—I. Cor., xi., 1. And of their enemies we read, *"They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus,"*—Acts, iv., 13. They witnessed by their life, by their death, *they were Martyrs.*

ii. The charge is addressed to us, how can we fulfill it? By showing forth in our lives what we have professed with our lips; that we are CHRIST's Soldiers and Servants; by living as strangers and pilgrims here, as citizens of Heaven; by redeeming the time, because the days are evil, instead of being partakers of the evil times; by showing that we are indeed crucified unto the world.

III. Consider the difficulties, and the helps, in witnessing of CHRIST:

i. The difficulties: If we are to witness of CHRIST, we must witness against the world, and, therefore, it will put every obstacle in our way; we must disregard its maxims, and so it will speak against us, and persecute us; we shall find, often, our dearest friends among our opponents; but *"he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"*—S. Matt., x., 37; our own nature, too, will rise up and try and hinder us: *"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind"*—Rom., vii., 23; and yet again the disguised temptations of Satan (II. Cor., xi., 14).

ii. The helps:

(a.) The Holy Spirit: *"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,"* and that Spirit is Almighty. We are to overcome our obstacles in the power of the Whitsuntide gift; and so, like the Apostles, to pray and wait for it.

(b.) Meditation on the life of our LORD: We must so live with JESUS, through meditation, that the world may be forced to take knowledge of us, that we have been with JESUS. Yes, we must witness, by our lives and acts, that we have gazed into that thorn-crowned Face; that we have beheld those pierced Hands raised in benediction, as the Cloud received Him out of sight; that we have heard His last charge, and are determined to obey it.

Affections.—Pray earnestly for the power in which to witness of CHRIST; often recall His last charge; resolve to devote a certain time to systematic meditation on the life of our Blessed LORD.

WHITSUN-EVE.

GOD'S GARDEN.

"Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits,"—Cant., iv., 16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles in the upper chamber on Whitsun-Eve, waiting, and praying for the coming of the HOLY GHOST ; praying, perhaps, in words like these.

PRELUDE II.—Let us pray this prayer for our own souls at this great festival.

To-day is the Eve of the anniversary of the great birthday of the Church, the festival of that Holy Spirit, which was breathed, as it were, into the Church on the first Whitsun-Day ; and which is breathed into man at his Baptism, and, again and again, in each Sacramental gift. Let us consider this text as it applies—I., to the Church ; II., to the individual soul.

I. As it applies to the Church :

i. The garden is the Church of CHRIST, and this is the prayer of the Apostles before Pentecost. The gardener is JESUS—Mary supposed Him to be the gardener. (S. John, xx., 15.)

ii. The Wind is the HOLY GHOST—that rushing mighty Wind which blew upon the Church at Pentecost. The wind is the great type of the Holy Spirit. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth,"* &c.—S. John, iii., 8. We saw its work in the wondrous result of that day.

iii. The spices are the merits of the Saints. They could not flow out, they would not be merits, but that they are really the work of the HOLY GHOST.

iv. The Wind blew upon the Church at Pentecost, and it has been blowing ever since. The North wind, with its chilly blasts, to brace the Church : trials and persecutions to prove it. The South wind, gently invigorating it after seasons of trouble and difficulty, healing its wounds.

II. But the more practical application of the text now is to ourselves :

i. (a.) The garden is our soul. At our baptism it is like Eden. JESUS is the gardener, and yet, like Adam, we are charged to keep it and to dress it. (Gen., ii., 15.)

(b.) The wind is the same HOLY GHOST by whom are all the gifts of the soul, and of the Church.

(c.) What are the spices? Our holy lives, Christian graces, good works done through correspondence with grace. Myrrh is the principal spice which the Bridegroom seeks in the Canticles. Have we any myrrh for Him? Myrrh typifies penitence.

ii. How does the HOLY GHOST work? Chiefly through the Sacramental channels of the Church; but Its operations are like the wind, blowing where it listeth; no accounting for all the wonders He does, above all laws. How we see sometimes the wonders of preventing grace in the unbaptized, and those in mortal sin! or look upon some soul in trouble, and see the Comforter at work there! His working in us is quite as wonderful as in the Apostles. *Visible* supernatural gifts are not the greatest, for Judas could work miracles.

iii. We must not expect the growth in our gardens to be too rapid; it must be slow and gradual, to be healthy and enduring; first the blade, then the ear, &c. (S. Mark, iv., 28.) Not always victory, but always struggle.

iv. Let us say this as *our* Whitsuntide prayer, and say it in regard to all our devotions.

(a.) In regard to our prayers, are they not often cold and unreal? The HOLY GHOST is the Spirit of Prayer—pray this text then.

(b.) In regard to our meditations, are they not often spoiled by wandering thoughts and distractions? Do we not need help? The HOLY GHOST is the Spirit of Meditation. Therefore pray, “*Awake, O North Wind,*” &c.

(c.) Lastly, and chiefly, as to our Communion. Let this be our prayer in preparation. Come, O North Wind, the cold searching blasts of penitence, for the HOLY GHOST is the Convincer of sin; then the gentle, gracious breath of the South Wind, the Words of Absolution, for it is the HOLY GHOST breathing through the form of the Sacrament that heals us. The wine and oil of the Good Samaritan, smarting first, but then soothing.

v. Why are we so anxious that our garden should bring forth spices? For ourselves? No; for our Beloved. And so, when our souls are prepared, our garden ready, the spices flowing, we may come to our Communion, come to our Beloved, and say the rest of the text, “*Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits.*”

vi. Would not this be a good Whitsuntide resolve, to pray these words in regard to our Prayers, Meditations, and Communion, to accept the charge of the garden—to occupy till He comes? (S. Luke, xix., 13.) Yes, it is our Whitsuntide prayer. May it have its daily answer, till that next great birthday of the Church in Heaven.

Affections.—Colloquy with the Holy Spirit; pray for the grace of true penitence, of contrition; that you may, indeed, co-operate with Divine grace; that JESUS, your Beloved, may see of the travail of His Soul, the fruits of His Passion, in you, and may be satisfied.

WHITSUN-DAY

THE WIND OF GOD.

"He sendeth out his word and melteth them: he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow."—Ps., cxlvii., 18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles at Pentecost, waiting until the sound of a rushing mighty wind is heard—the coming of the HOLY GHOST—and then the graces flowing out from them, upon the multitude at Jerusalem first, and then upon the whole world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may have our share in the Whitsuntide gift: that the graces of the Church may indeed flow forth upon us individually.

WHITSUN-DAY is the completion of that great work of Redemption which was begun on Christmas-Day, and this verse most strikingly sums it all up. Let us meditate on these words, as they refer—I., to the Church; II., to the individual.

I. We have here the history of the Kingdom of Heaven in its corporate capacity, the Church:

i. *"He sendeth out His Word."* *"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World."*—I. S. John, iv., 14.

(a.) Whence? From His throne in Heaven. (Wisdom xviii., 14-15; S. John, iii., 16.)

(b.) When? In the fulness of time, on Christmas-Day. (Gal., iv., 4.)

(c.) Where? Lower than the high places of the earth; lower than the palaces of Kings; lower than the mansions of the rich; lower than the abodes of the poor; lower still—to the stable of Bethlehem.

(d.) Why? To take our nature upon Him: aye, and in our nature to take all creation into Himself—to be the Saviour of the world.

ii. *"He melteth them"*—the result.

(a.) Consider the condition of man when JESUS came—worn out by rebellion against GOD, hardened by neglect of His calls in the Jewish Church; in the darkness and ignorance of heathenism elsewhere—all frozen, indeed, in the icy grasp of death.

(b.) JESUS came to reconcile man to GOD; to break that hard heart by a new and closer call—by His Life, by His Passion, by His Death, so to appeal to man's pity, to man's love, that indeed at last He melted the ice-bound heart.

iii. And then—*"He bloweth with His Wind"* And what is that Wind but His Holy Spirit, Which, when the sound as of a rushing mighty wind was heard, at Pentecost, came down upon the new-born Church, inspiring it with life!

(a.) Our LORD'S work had been to melt mankind, and to prepare them for the reception of those gifts which were to come by the Holy Spirit.

(b.) To prepare, as it were, the form of the Church—as Adam's lifeless form had been made from the dust—and then the Holy Spirit's coming was the breathing into it the breath of life.

(c.) To prepare the form and matter of the Sacraments, and then He caused His Wind to blow, and It gave them their power and life.

iv. "*The waters flow*"—the result of the sending forth of the HOLY GHOST—the waters of grace.

(a.) In the extension of the Church—on Whitsun-Day, 3,000 souls; and then rapidly extending, until they cover now the whole earth. (Ezek., xlvii., 3-6.)

(b.) In the Sacraments of the Church—those channels by which Divine grace is supplied to meet the need of every individual soul in the Church, in all the manifold circumstances of life.

II. And now let us consider these words as they refer to the Kingdom of Heaven, in her individual capacity, to each member of CHRIST, to ourselves:

i. "*He sendeth out His Word.*" The Sacraments are the extensions of the Incarnation to the individual. In Baptism, God the Word was born, as it were, into our soul; and each Communion has been a reception of Him into our hands and hearts. (I. S. John, i., 1-3.)

ii. "*He melteth them.*"

(a.) Consider the condition of our hearts before we knew the love of JESUS—so dead, so hard, so cold, till He came to melt us, by appealing to our personal love and pity, by His Passion. "*I looked for some to have pity on me.*"—Ps lxix., 21. "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*"—S. John, xii., 32

(b.) He reconciled us to God by His precious Blood. The Jews said in defiance, "*His Blood be on us;*" we pray in humble trust the same words; and that precious Blood is poured upon us, cleansing us from all sin. (I. S. John, i., 7-8-9.) Reconciling us to God through the ministry of reconciliation. (II. Cor., v., 18-20.)

iii. "*He bloweth with His Wind.*" In our Baptism (S. John, iii., 8); in our Confirmation (Acts, viii., 17); in our Penitence (Ezek., xxxvii., 9—the raising of the slain by mortal sin through the healing of the wind (*πνεῦμα*) in penitence); in our Eucharists (Gen., xv., 17—a type of the HOLY GHOST coming upon the Elements in Consecration of the H. E.); in our Prayers (Rom., viii., 26); in our Meditations (I. Cor., ii., 9-12); in our Self-Examinations (S. John, xvi., 8—the HOLY GHOST reproving us of our sin in Self-Examination); and in all the various gifts of the Spirit (I. Cor., xii., 7-11; Isaiah, xl., 2).

iv. "*And the waters flow.*" We must pray, indeed, that the waters may flow in us, the fruits of the Spirit (Gal., v., 22-23)—all the virtues of a Christian life. We need to examine ourselves about this, "*for by their fruits ye shall know them.*"—S. Matt., vii., 20.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for all the blessings of Redemption and Sanctification; tender love to our LORD for all His love; invocation of the Holy Spirit; prayer for grace to bring forth the fruit of good works by obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

WHITSUN-MONDAY.

THE THREE PROCESSIONS OF THE DOVE.

"He sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, pluckt off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."—Gen., viii., 8-13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the dove, winging its weary way over the vast expanse of waters.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace never to grieve the Holy Spirit by rejecting His inspirations.

The dove is the especial type of the HOLY GHOST, and, in her three processions from the ark, we may see pictured the three missions of the HOLY GHOST: I. Brooding over chaos, and so introducing the work of Restoration. II. Overshadowing the B. V. Mary, at the Annunciation, and so beginning the work of Redemption. III. Resting on, and filling, the new-born Church at Pentecost, and so commencing the work of Sanctification.

I. *"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."*—Gen., i., 2. Consider:

i. The condition of the earth at chaos, *"wasteness and desolation," "and darkness upon the face of the deep;"* but not forsaken, the Spirit of God brooded over chaos; the word (*merachepeth*) signifies the tremulous fluttering of a bird over its nest; *"and there was Light,"* light to see the ruin, and then gradual restoration.

ii. The condition of the sinner's soul, the conflicting passions, the reign there of darkness; but not forgotten. The first gift, light to see our state, to realize our sin; for the HOLY GHOST is the Convincer of sin; and then, if we seek it, power of restoration.

II. "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.*"—S. Luke, i., 35. Consider:

i. The condition of mankind at the Annunciation. "*They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings; there is none that doeth good, no not one*"—Ps. xiv., 2. And yet not abandoned; the Holy Spirit still brooding over that mass of humanity; when, out of it, GOD took one; "the Lily among thorns;" "poor humanity's solitary boast;" and the HOLY GHOST overshadowed her, and GOD said, "*Let there be Light,*" and His Son stepped down into Creation, and Light was in the world, not only revealing the darkness and confusion of sin, but beginning the work of redemption. The second time the dove returned with the olive-leaf; and so, in the Annunciation, the Prince of Peace comes into the world, at first hidden in the Virgin's womb, as the olive-leaf amid the waters, but the pledge of that peace between GOD and man which was made through CHRIST.

ii. Our condition at Baptism. The HOLY GHOST comes down upon us, and JESUS is born in us; the olive-leaf is seen, for we are made children of GOD, and at peace with Him; before, we were children of wrath. The Light is put into the lamp of our nature; our vocation is to keep It burning, feeding It with the oil of prayer, and the Sacraments; seeing that the wick is cleansed, and trimmed, by penitence; that It may so shine before men, that they may glorify our Father Which is in Heaven.

III. "*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*"—Acts, ii., 4.

i. (a.) The third time the dove returned not, because she found that on which she could rest.

(b.) And so consider the Apostles at Pentecost: assembled, waiting, the HOLY GHOST comes down, rests upon them, and fills them. "*The Spirit of the LORD filleth the world*"—Wisd., i., 7; never again to leave it; finds Its resting-place in the soul of man, because JESUS had prepared man for the reception of the HOLY GHOST; had built up, as it were, the frame of the Church; and the Holy Spirit was to dwell in it, giving it life; and now indeed, permanently, Light was to shine in the darkness, and the work of Sanctification to begin.

ii. And this Spirit has rested on you; is working in you. Oh, by your penitence, remove every obstacle to His work, that you may indeed be filled with the HOLY GHOST, and show forth, in your life, the plenitude of His power.

Affections.—Pray for light to see yourself as you are; that the HOLY GHOST may convince you of sin; that the work, begun in Baptism, may go on, and grow in you, till you attain unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST; that you may never, by the neglect of the means of grace, quench the Holy Spirit.

WHITSUN-TUESDAY.

THE FIRE OF GOD.

"And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering."—Lev., ix., 24.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the Altar of Sacrifice, with its fire kept perpetually burning.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may continually keep alive the fire of the HOLY GHOST, the fire of the love of GOD, in your heart.

Fire, in the Bible, is one of the most striking types of the HOLY GHOST, and His work; e. g., "*The Lord thy God is a consuming Fire*"—Deut., iv., 24; the Burning Bush (Ex., iii., 2); the Fire that came down from Heaven to consume the sacrifices (Judg., vi., 21, I. Kings, xviii., 38, II. Chron., vii., 1, &c.); the Throne of GOD (Dan., vii., 9); "*I am come to send fire on the earth*"—S. Luke, xii., 49; the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost (Acts, ii., 3). Fire, too, is the emblem of love, and the HOLY GHOST is the Love of GOD.

I. Consider the Descent of the Fire from Heaven :

i. (a.) It was confined to the offerings of a sweet savour; the sin-offerings were burned on the earth, not on the Altar, and with common fire.

(b.) It was the token of GOD's acceptance of the offering. (Gen., iv., 4.)

(c.) It was the type of GOD's love; the signification of His satisfaction in the offering.

ii. (a.) Are our sacrifices those of a sweet savour, or spoiled by some sinful or selfish motive?

(b.) Do we realize that, in Baptism, the fire of the Holy Spirit did come down from Heaven on to the altar of our hearts?

(c.) Have we the love of GOD really burning in our hearts? Is our Blessed LORD satisfied because He sees of the travail of His soul in us?

II. Consider the duty and the means of keeping the sacred fire burning :

i. (a.) "*The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.*"—Lev., vi., 13. To see to this was the Priests' work.

(b.) It was to be replenished every morning with wood.

(c.) And fed daily, with the sacrifices of a sweet savour.

ii. How do we fulfill our duty in keeping alive the flame of love within us?

(a.) "*Quench not the Spirit.*"—I. Thess., v., 19. The word *quench* is the same as that used in the parable of the foolish Virgins, "*our lamps are gone out*"—S. Matt., xxv., 8; i. e., for want of oil.

(b.) Do we regularly replenish the fire, with the fuel of prayer, and other devotional exercises, and the Sacraments?

(c.) Especially, do we feed the flame, by daily acts of self-denial, and sacrifice? The fire existed on the Altar only for this. If the love of GOD burns but feebly in your heart, examine whether this is the reason.

III. Consider the many Altars on which no fire is burning !

i. (a.) Tradition says that the sacred fire was kept continually burning till the reign of the wicked King Manasseh, or about 800 years.

(b.) The rest of the nation's life was indeed a living death.

(a.) Sacrifice, in the moral experience of man, generates love; the greater our sacrifice for a person, generally, the greater our love for them, and theirs for us.

(b.) The flame of love will only burn brightly in our hearts if we feed it with acts of self-sacrifice; in how many hearts, on how many Altars, the fire has gone out for lack of fuel.

(c.) The fire consumed the whole burnt-offering; we must not take any pride in our sacrifices; let them all be consumed with the flame of love—the GOD of fire in our hearts, they are all for Him.

Affections.—Desire that your life should be one of self-denial; at each act of self-sacrifice thank GOD for the opportunity of making the offering; consider what gift you can cast upon the flames of love, during this festival of the Spirit of Love.

WEDNESDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

THE CLOUD OF GOD.

"I will appear in the cloud."—Lev., xvi., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a procession of clouds, moving silently across the blue sky; their varying shapes and colours; sometimes in thick masses, dark and threatening; sometimes in graceful wreaths, radiant with all the glories of the sunlight; and think of them as alway symbols of the HOLY GHOST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that Nature's voices may speak to you more often of GOD.

Among the created symbols of the HOLY GHOST, the cloud is one of the most prominent; and, in the Bible, we find three species of cloud used as types of the Holy Spirit and His work. Let us meditate on them:

I. The Thick Cloud, the symbol of GOD's Awful Majesty, as at Sinai. *"He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him with dark water and thick clouds to cover him."*—Ps. xviii., 11. Consider:

i. We must fear GOD, before we can rightly love Him; for *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"*—Ps. cxi., 10; and the end of wisdom is to love GOD. It is only perfect love which *"casteth out fear."*—I. S. John, iv., 18.

ii. If we do not love GOD as we ought, may it not sometimes be because we are wanting in a spirit of awe and reverence when in His Presence? *"How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*—Gen., xxviii., 17.

iii. The danger of familiarity, and therefore the importance of a solemn and dignified ritual in Divine service; the duty of fearing GOD was not removed by the Gospel dispensation. (I. Pet., ii., 17.)

II. The Shadow-Cloud, the symbol of GOD's Providence, as in the wilderness. *"He spread a cloud for a covering."*—Ps. cv., 39. Consider:

i. Its shelter from the heat of labour, but especially of temptation (Ps. lvii., 1), and its protection from enemies (Ex., xiv., 20) and from all danger (Ps. xci., 1).

ii. Its fertilizing effect upon the land, a type of the effect of the rain of grace upon the soul. (Ps. lxxii., 6.)

iii. All this is typical of the work of the Spirit in Baptism; as S. Paul says, *"And were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea"*—I. Cor., x., 2; *"born of water and of the Spirit"*—S. John, iii., 5.

III. The Bright Cloud, the symbol of GOD's Glory, as in the Transfiguration. *"Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them."*—S. Matt., xvii., 5.

i. The symbol of that Presence into which we enter:

(a.) In the House of GOD, especially at the offering of the Holy Eucharist, for *"the glory of the LORD filled the house."*—II. Chron., vii., 1.

(b.) In Meditation and Prayer. *"They feared as they entered into the cloud."*—S. Luke, ix., 34.

ii. The symbol of the hidden working of the HOLY GHOST:

(a.) In the Church we see the results only.

(b.) In the Saints of GOD. *"The great cloud of witnesses."*—Heb., xii., 1.

(c.) In our own souls.

iii. S. Peter said, *"Let us make here three tabernacles,"* and, while he spake, they entered into the cloud. This was henceforth to be their dwelling-place, in the mysterious overshadowing of the HOLY GHOST.

iv. Moses came down from Mount Sinai (Ex., xxxiv., 35), and CHRIST from the Mount of Transfiguration (S. Mark, ix., 15), and each had some rays of the brightness of the cloud still upon him. In our meditation we enter the cloud, not that we may come back gloomy and desponding, but that we may come out from the cloud with some rays of that brightness still upon us; that we may bring sunshine into the dark places of the world, sunshine into the clouded hearts of men; this should be the effect of meditation.

Affections.—Desire often to retire into this cloud, that you may be refreshed and invigorated; thank the Holy Spirit for all He offers you; pray for grace to live more in the Spirit; resolve to be more earnest in prayer and meditation.

THURSDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

THE PILLAR OF GOD.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."—Ex., xiii, 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, resting upon the camp in the wilderness, and going before the people in their journeys; the Source of their Confidence, and their Guide.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always look to the Holy Spirit for guidance, and ever obey His inspirations.

The Pillar of Cloud and Fire is one of the great types of the HOLY GHOST, both in the symbols used—Cloud and Fire—and in the office performed. We have considered the symbols, let us now meditate on this office of the Pillar of God. Consider:

I. The HOLY GHOST as the Guide:

i. During the forty years' wandering in the wilderness (the great type of our exile, wandering through the wilderness of the world) the Pillar was the Guide of the Israelites; the wilderness may have seemed pathless, and yet they could not go wrong, for they had an infallible Guide. So to us the world seems to be pathless, or rather a maze of paths, all leading into the broad way, except the one path of divine Vocation; in that we have the infallible Guide of the HOLY GHOST. *"He will guide you into all truth."*—S. John, xvi., 13. The HOLY GHOST is our Guide in all paths of danger, doubt, and difficulty.

ii. Whither? To the land of promise, their inheritance, Canaan. So the HOLY GHOST is leading us to our inheritance, Heaven; the path by which He leads us may seem devious, but it is the only safe way for us; it may not be an easy way, but the HOLY GHOST looks only to the end, and the difficulties of the way are not worth consideration; e. g., Abraham, *"They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."*—Gen., xii., 5. The beginning and the end all that is recorded; the difficulties and dangers of the journey passed over in silence. *"O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy hill."*—Ps. xliii., 3.

iii. The condition—obedience. If we do not feel the HOLY GHOST leading

us now, may it not be because, in the past, we have failed to act on His suggestions? The obedience must be absolute; if the HOLY GHOST calls us to *one* thing, and we do not obey, we are not to expect that He will move on to any *other* thing, till that is done. Is there any call of GOD we have neglected in the past, because it was too hard? We must go back and obey that, and then the Pillar will move on before us.

II. The office of the Pillar of GOD is not always to lead us on our way; but, often to check us, and stop us, when we want to go forward:

i. The Pillar often remained stationary over the camp of Israel. (Numb., ix., 18-23.) So one of the most important offices of the HOLY GHOST for us is to check our impatience, to teach us to wait; if we do not hear His Voice saying, "*this is the way, walk ye in it*"—Is., xxx., 21, we must wait until we do; if He does not speak, it is either because there is some past call to be obeyed first, or because our present duty is to wait.

ii. But the time of waiting is not to be a time of idleness. No; you are to abide, not only in the Presence of the HOLY GHOST, but under the influence, and more, in the very fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And this time of waiting, however long it may be, is the time of preparation; that the HOLY GHOST may be able to use you for some work He has in store for you. It is the time of growth in the inner life; the storing up of supernatural energy to be used when the Voice says, "*Go forward*."—Ex., xiv., 15. So our LORD waited thirty years at Nazareth before the HOLY GHOST came down, and anointed Him for the work of His short Ministry; so S. Paul spent three years in Arabia, and eight years at Tarsus, in preparation, before he was called to the Apostleship; and so we find has been the history of almost all those whom GOD has raised up to do some special work for Him.

III. The Guidance of the HOLY GHOST, the Source of our Confidence:

i. When we think of the strength of our foes, the number and subtlety of our temptations, and the too ready response they find in our own evil nature, we might well despond, if it were not for this thought, GOD Himself is our Guide.

ii. When we remember that this Guide is Almighty, that He is the Love of GOD, and loves us, we may well say, "*In thee, O LORD, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion*."—Ps. lxxi., 1.

Affections.—Examine whether you are conscious of any call of GOD which you have not yet obeyed; pray that you may follow promptly the guidance of the Holy Spirit; resolve to wait for the Voice, and to seek it in earnest prayer.

FRIDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

THE WATER OF GOD.

"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."—Is., xlv., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the gratitude with which the shipwrecked mariner on his raft, or the fainting traveller in the sandy desert, welcomes a shower of rain.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may learn to value the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In the Scriptures, Water is one of the types of the HOLY GHOST, and especially of His office as the Quickener, and Sustainer of Life. Consider:

I. The HOLY GHOST as the Quickener of life: "LORD and Giver of Life."

i. (a.) In the history of Creation, the first animate life is from the waters, on the fifth day: *"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life."*—Gen., i., 20.

(b.) Science discovers the earliest germs of life in water. (*Infusoria*.)

ii. The first germ of spiritual life in the soul springs from the waters of Baptism, through the operation of the HOLY GHOST.

iii. The power of water makes the dry, parched ground bring forth luxuriant vegetation; restores, in man, suspended animation, and revives the fainting; so it is by the action of the HOLY GHOST in absolution, that power of resurrection is given to those baptized souls that are dry and dead in sin; for, all resurrection to life is by His energy; and it is He that causes the wilderness of the world to blossom as the rose, with the saints and martyrs of CHRIST.

II. The HOLY GHOST as the Sustainer of life.

i. Water is not only necessary to quicken life, but to sustain it, when quickened. Vegetation cannot live without the rain and dew, and man himself must die, in a very few days, if deprived of water. The result of drought in nature is death to everything.

ii. So, too, the HOLY GHOST not only implants the germ of life, by the waters of Baptism, but sustains and nourishes that germ, and gives it power of growth, by the waters which are brought to it through the other channels of grace: *"My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh also longeth after thee, in a barren and dry land where no water is."*—Ps. lxiii., 2. No water, but the streams of grace in the Sacramental gifts of the Church, drawn from *"the wells of salvation."*—Is., xii., 3. Spiritual drought, *i. e.*, the neglect of the Sacraments, soon causes death.

iii. Water has also both healing and cleansing properties. And so, in the spiritual life, it is by the HOLY GHOST, flowing through the Sacraments, that we are cleansed and healed. (Tit., iii., 5.)

III. The condition of obtaining this life-giving water. Thirsty! *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."*—S. Matt., v., 6. If we are not filled with the Spirit, may it not be because we do not thirst? Robert Hall speaks of the following dispositions as necessary for obtaining the Holy Spirit:

i. (a.) A high estimation of His gifts. *"My soul hath longed for thy salvation."*—Ps. cxix., 81.

(b.) Fervent prayer, which is encouraged by the assurance that what we are asking for, God wills to give us. *"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."*—I. Thess., iv., 3.

ii. (a.) Habitual reliance on the HOLY GHOST in all difficulties; the habit of looking to Him for guidance.

(b.) Loving obedience to all His inspirations.

Of these we may consider the first two as the conditions necessary to receiving the fullness of the Divine Gift; the last two as the conditions of retaining It, and of Its increase.

Affections.—Realize the barrenness of the world around us, and long for the streams of refreshing grace (Ps. xlii., 1); make an act of faith in our LORD, Who sends us the Comforter (S. John, vii., 38); cultivate a spirit of gratitude to the HOLY GHOST for all His gifts; and say the *Veni Creator*, or *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.

SATURDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

THE DUTY OF EMBERTIDE PRAYER.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."—Eph., vi., 19-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the ordination of S. Paul (Acts, xiii., 2-4); and then, those on the Right Hand at the last day, brought to the knowledge of GOD through his instrumentality; all who were converted directly by his preaching, or writings; all those whom *they* converted, &c.; the insignificance of the instrument *compared* with the magnificence of the result.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for all those who are to be ordained to-morrow throughout the whole Church.

The Church has appointed the four Ember seasons—twelve days of fasting and prayer in each year—for those who are to be ordained. Consider:

I. The solemn and eternal issues of each ordination:

i. To the parties interested.

(a.) To those who are ordained. They will be judged by their Vocation.

(b.) To those souls to whom GOD sends them with the message of grace.

(c.) To the whole Church in Heaven, in Paradise, and on Earth.

(d.) To the devil and his angels, who look on with hatred and fear.

ii. It is the beginning of the work of a Soldier, a Steward, a Fisherman.

(a.) The young Soldier, full of courage, receiving his commission, and taking the vow, not only to resist the attacks of Satan, as all have vowed in Baptism, but to attack his strongholds, to set free his prisoners. How many await their release?

(b.) The new Steward, full of good resolutions, receiving his authority and the charge of his master's household. (S. Mark, xiii., 34.) One day it will be said to him, Give an account of thy stewardship. (S. Luke, xvi., 2.)

(c.) The inexperienced Fisherman, full of hope, casting his net, *one more net*, into the waters of the world. It will not be drawn ashore till the Last Day comes.

iii. The Judgment Day will reveal the results of all this; and the results, whether for good or evil, will be *eternal*.

II. The duty and importance of prayer for these. All the work of the Ministry gains energy from the prayers of the Church. The Church's life circulates through the Priesthood; *it* is the instrument through which the *spiritual force* is applied; the prayers of the Church, the means by which that force is generated:

i. The mysterious lesson taught by Aaron and Hur holding up the hands of Moses, while Joshua fought against Amalek (Ex. xvii. 8-13); the individual members of the Church, supporting the Hands of our Great MEDIATOR in Heaven; and, while His Hands are thus held up, His soldiers are victorious on earth, through the strength thus added.

ii. The force of the Priest, who, though perhaps possessing little sanctity or ability of his own, represents in his work the prayers of many.

iii. The members of the Church Triumphant, and Expectant, pray for the Priests of the Church Militant. Should we not be in a poor way if we had to depend only on the uncertain prayers of our brethren on earth?—and yet the Church has done her part, by ordering that the four Ember seasons shall be observed with prayer and fasting.

III. The Priest has special claims on your prayers:

i. He goes forth to distribute the Whitsuntide gifts of the HOLY GHOST by the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. He works for the Church; and "*He that watereth shall be watered also himself*."—Prov., xi., 25.

ii. He incurs danger to himself by his very work. (I. Cor., ix., 27.)

(a.) If it is a failure, perhaps, despondency and loss of energy.

(b.) If it is a success, perhaps, vanity and self-confidence.

iii. The Courage required to speak *boldly* the mystery of the Gospel; the three motives tempting to *compromise*:

(a.) Fear of the consequences of preaching unpleasant truths.

(b.) Desire of outward results in Church work.

(c.) Love of personal popularity.

iv. We lament the indifference and deadness of the Church; and rightly trace much of it to worldliness or want of energy in her Ministers; and yet are not we to blame, who expect so much from them, and pay so little for them?

Affections.—Thank God for sending the labourers into His Harvest; resolve to keep the Ember seasons better; to pray more regularly for all the Clergy of the Church, and especially for those under whose ministrations God has placed you; make an act of Contrition for the neglect of this duty in the past.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES AS EXERCISED IN OUR DEVOTIONS.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—I. Cor., xiii., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the glorious worship of Heaven, as set before us in the Epistle for the day. (Rev., iv., 1.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of devotion.

Our worship of GOD is something we owe to GOD—a duty; and it is to be rendered by the exercise of the Theological Virtues. Faith, Hope, and Charity. Consider:

I. Our Duty to GOD. It is threefold: to believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him.

i. Faith in GOD: it is incompatible with knowledge, or perfect understanding; the unreasonableness of those who will believe nothing which their reason cannot grasp; *e. g.*, a blind man and colour, a deaf man and music, a child and abstruse mathematics. Beside, Rationalists, as a rule, while they will not accept the teaching of Religion, on the authority of the Church, think you unreasonable if you do not believe most wonderful theories, which rest simply on their own individual authority. Our duty, then, is first to believe in GOD, *i. e.*, to accept His Revelation of Himself.

ii. Hope in GOD: this is inconsistent with contentment in natural beatitude in the present; because the promises of GOD in the future, for which we are to hope, are conditional on the resignation of much which this world offers as its happiness. How wonderful is the power of hope! to trust in GOD in all the difficulties of life! how bright it makes life! how light its trials! How miserable is the man without hope!

iii. Love to GOD: this is the supreme act of our being, for it is the exercise of every faculty toward its highest end; and yet this, the greatest, is the hardest of all our duties; because there is another who comes between, and claims our love—SELF; and we cannot really love both.

II. The Fulfilment of our Duty to GOD. Since this is our duty, how are we to fulfil it? Is there not some practical answer? Yes. By the exercise

of these three Theological Virtues, in the three divisions of devotion, Meditation, Prayer, and Worship.

i. MEDITATION is an act, or exercise, of *Faith*; it is the memory calling up the things of GOD, the intellect considering them, and the will accepting them, insisting on their reality, and passing on to act on them.

ii. PRAYER is an act, or exercise, of *Hope*; it is the practical use of the chain which binds together GOD and man, to impetrate those things for which we hope, and which we trust GOD will give us, if for our good.

iii. WORSHIP is an act, or exercise, of *Love*; it is the acknowledgment of the relationship which exists between GOD and man; the subjection of ourselves to Him, Whom we recognize as the LORD of our heart, and the pouring out the treasures of our affection at His feet.

III. The Result of the neglect of these exercises.

i. Theoretically, to neglect—

(a.) Meditation, is to deny the existence of GOD, and to try to blot Him out of His own world, by forgetting Him.

(b.) Prayer, is to disregard the link between GOD and man, to rest in the present, and to give up the future.

(c.) Worship, is to repudiate the relationship between GOD and man, and to make gods of ourselves.

ii. Practically, we may test the truth of these theories, by appealing to history, and to experience. Of these three—

(a.) Worship is the most neglected by those outside the Catholic Church; having no valid Eucharist, this is natural, and is marked by its necessary result, great coldness; for there is an absence of the exercise of love.

(b.) Meditation is the next in order of neglect, and this accounts for their great want of faith; *e. g.*, the Rationalists of the sectarian bodies in Germany, &c.

(c.) Prayer, the only one fulfilled, and this accounts for the undue development of Hope into presumption; *e. g.*, Calvinism, with its doctrine of personal assurance, &c.

iii. Individually, let us examine how far we have neglected these exercises, and trace the results of this neglect in our own virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love.

IV. The Holy Eucharist, as summing up all.

i. It is the central Act of the Church's worship; by Which GOD is most glorified, and man most blessed.

ii. At the Celebration, we meditate, we pray, we worship.

iii. It is the highest exercise of our Faith, our Hope, our Love for Him, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in the existence of GOD, and in all that He has revealed to us by His Church; of hope in Him, trusting in all His promises; of love to Him, for all His Goodness. Say the *Te Deum*.

S. ANDREW'S DAY.

THE SOUL'S SEARCH FOR CHRIST.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, He saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master.) Where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."—S. John, i., 35-40.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Andrew gazing for the first time on the Face of JESUS, as the LORD turned and asked, What seek ye?

PRELUDE—II. Pray for grace to follow CHRIST.

I. Consider the teaching S. Andrew had received. "*Behold the Lamb of God;*"

i. The first knowledge of CHRIST which the soul needs, is that He is the Lamb of GOD, who takes away from us our sins; the foundation must be laid in the school of penitence.

ii. The next lesson must be that He is the Good Shepherd, who has come to take us away from our sins, *i. e.*, that we are to follow Him out of this world of sin.

iii. S. Andrew had learnt these two lessons, he had begun to follow. When JESUS turned, and Andrew saw that Face, and, prepared by penitence, loved, then he could not but follow forever. The attraction of that love led him to follow our LORD through life till the Cross was reached, to follow Him till on his own cross he died, and now and in eternity he follows the Lamb where-soever He goes.

II. Consider our LORD's question, "*What seek ye?*"

i. What is the end of our religion, what are we seeking in it? to make life easier, to banish some fears of hereafter, to gain greater influence, to obtain some present reward? None of these can be the true reason for following CHRIST.

ii. What is the end of our faith, what ought we to seek? To find out where JESUS dwells, that we may abide in Him; to answer, as the legend says S. Thomas did, when asked a similar question by our LORD: "*Nōn, nisi Tē, Domine,*" Nothing, but Thyself, LORD.

iii. Where does JESUS dwell? In the hearts of His people, in the altars of His Church, in Heaven; do we love to go to these dwelling-places of our LORD in meditation? to enter into our hearts to commune with Him there, to see Him manifested in the lives of the Saints; to draw near to the Holy Eucharist; to lift up our thoughts to Heaven?

III. Consider our LORD's answer, "*Come and see.*"

i. It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge of CHRIST, we must have an experimental knowledge, we must *come* that we may see.

ii. When we have thus experimentally found CHRIST, we must abide with Him. How many come and see, and go away; we must never leave Him, but dwell with Him here, that we abide in Him in eternity.

iii. "*They abode with Him that day.*" It was the second day; the first day John had pointed to Him as the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world, (S. John, i., 29). This represents the prophetic dispensation, which pointed to CHRIST—this second day is the day of grace, during which we follow CHRIST until, as evening draws on, we abide with Him; the third day will be the day of glory, when the short night of the grave has passed, and we shall dwell with Him in eternity.

Affections.—Realize the need of seeking only CHRIST in your religious life; pray that He may take away your sins; resolve to follow Him more earnestly now.

S. THOMAS'S DAY.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."—S. John, xx., 24-25

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Thomas gazing upon JESUS, and his doubts all gone, confessing: "*My Lord and my God.*"

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be a faithful witness of CHRIST.

I. Consider the doubt of S. Thomas:

i. It was probably, to a great extent, the result of a temperament which was slow in the reception of truth, and saw difficulties in believing which other Apostles did not.

ii. It was honest doubt: S. Thomas loved our LORD, desired to believe in His Resurrection, but the doctrine seemed to be too full of joy to be true. He wished to believe, and asked for certain evidence.

iii. Our LORD gave him the proof he required; It should be an encouragement to us in our doubts to find that an Apostle, after all our LORD's training, could be subjected to this temptation. S. Thomas, in asking for the evidence he did, showed a weakness of faith, not an absolute want of faith; and when his faith had been strengthened by the sight of CHRIST, he manifested in his after life the reality of the belief which he had been so slow to gain.

II. Consider how our LORD here anticipates a religious difficulty of the present day, and shows us how to deal with it.

i. From various causes this is an age of doubt; with some caused by temperament, with others education, but often it is honest doubt.

ii. The evidences of our faith are many, but fall into two divisions; intellectual and moral; the former seems the most satisfactory proof, the latter really is the proof which has converted the world; the former may lead to a logical conclusion, which may support a nominal Christianity; the latter only can produce a moral conviction, on which a Christian life can be built.

iii. Christianity is the religion of the followers of a crucified LORD, Who has left them, as the very symbol of their faith, the Cross; as the law of their life crucifixion, as the test of their truth, the rule, "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*"—S. Matt., vii., 20. And the cause of unbelief, alas, is judging of Christianity by the lives of nominal Christians; unbelief is not so much caused by the bright shining of the light of science, as by the expiring dimness of the light of Christian virtue.

III. Consider our responsibilities in this age of doubt:

i. Christianity is at once an individual and a Catholic religion; universal, in its embrace of all; it is individual in its dealing with each, and its responsibilities are individual.

ii. I am risen with CHRIST (Col., iii., 1), where then are the signs of crucifixion in me, the prints of the nails in my hands, the marks of the Cross in my acts? Can I see them? If not, how can I expect the world to see them.

iii. There is perhaps some soul watching me, anxiously searching in my life for the signs which will remove its doubts, the marks of crucifixion, the proofs of resurrection—how sad if I disappoint that search!

Affections.—Responsibility for witnessing to a crucified LORD; examine what signs of the Cross are manifested in your life; pray that you may indeed be crucified with CHRIST; resolve that your religion shall, in some one definite act, influence your outer life.

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL.

CONVERSION.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—S. Matt., xviii., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul gazing for the first time on the Face of JESUS, and then rising from the earth to undo and alter his whole past life.

PRELUDE II —Pray for the child-like spirit of the converted soul.

One of the most important, and one of the most misunderstood doctrines of our faith is conversion. The conversion of S. Paul is recorded in the Bible with a fulness second only to the account of the Passion of our LORD; let us in our meditation to-day try to learn something of this first great event in the spiritual life.

I. Consider what Conversion is :

i. It is a turning of the will to GOD, an act of free will. It is effected often, as in S. Paul's case, by a light which reveals to us at once our LORD, and our self; and a voice in the soul which brings home to us the ingratitude of our past life; that we have indeed been persecuting Him, whom we professed to serve.

ii. It is not to be confused with regeneration; S. Paul after his Conversion was baptized by Ananias.

iii. It is not everything, only the first step: S. Paul spent three days in fasting and prayer before his baptism; three years in Arabia and several years in Tarsus, before his call to the apostleship.

II. Consider the importance of Conversion :

i. When we sin our will is turned away from GOD; Conversion, or turning to GOD, is necessary as the first step in true repentance.

ii. Our LORD taught the great necessity of Conversion, when He said, *"Except ye be converted,"* etc., and remember this was addressed not to open sinners, but to the disciples of JESUS.

iii. We are always progressing in the direction in which our will is turned, hence the importance of often asking ourselves am I now converted, or do I need Conversion? For from its very nature, Conversion may take place more than once, indeed, as often as we turn from GOD, we need to turn back to GOD.

III. Consider from S. Paul's example some of the signs by which we may know whether we are converted or not.

i. *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"*—Acts, ix., 6. This is the first sign of Conversion, obedience to GOD; in S. Paul it led to an entirely changed life, and in asking this question the converted soul trusts GOD for the supply of grace needful to enable it to obey.

ii. *"It shall be told thee what thou must do."*—Acts, ix., 16. Humility in accepting instruction from a minister of the Church, Ananias.

iii. *"He received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized."*—Acts, ix., 18. Use of sacraments, and means of grace; the converted soul will feel its need of, and use, all the means of grace within its reach. Are these three signs of Conversion to be seen in your life?

Affections.—Realize the importance of real Conversion; examine the signs of Conversion in your life; pray for those you feel you most need: resolve on some change in your life, which may be for the greater glory of God.

THE PRESENTATION.

THE LAW OF OBLATION.

"And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord."—S. Luke, ii., 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Simeon, with JESUS in his arms, saying the *Nunc Dimittis*.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may indeed, with the one oblation of our Blessed LORD, offer yourself and all you have, as a living sacrifice to the Eternal Father.

I. Consider the preparation for the Presentation :

i. By Moses, in instituting the law which found its true fulfilment to-day (Exod., xiii., 2 ; xxii., 29, etc.).

ii. By Haggai and Malachi, in prophecy which to-day was accomplished (Haig., ii., 9 ; Mal., iii., 1).

iii. By Herod, in rebuilding the Temple with unparalleled magnificence, for political purposes he thought, and yet it was for this festival ; so GOD uses the worldly as His instruments.

II. Consider the significance of the Presentation :

i. The aged priest Simeon takes the Child in his arms, and now is the moment when the two covenants meet and embrace ; Simeon the priest of the old dispensation, JESUS the High Priest of the new ; and then he says, "*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.*" Yes, the old covenant has done its work, and now is to be dismissed. JESUS our Peace has come, and so Simeon now can die in peace.

ii. The supreme moment of the world's history has come, the moment for which GOD had been waiting from the Creation—the first perfect act of worship. Man had been drawing near to GOD with sacrifice, but man had nothing really to offer, till GOD gave His Son to be the one perfect Oblation, that man might continually offer Him to GOD. Then began the perfect worship of the Christian Church.

iii. And this was one of the purposes for which CHRIST came, that a worthy oblation might be made ; to be the Lamb, Which should take away the sin of the world ; in Him GOD receives the only sinless Offering the world can offer.

III. Consider the continuation of the Presentation now :

i. Every act of your Lord's life is a mystery and a law ; the Presentation is to last on, CHRIST is to be RE-PRESENTED in every Eucharist.

ii. In each Eucharist the same offering is made, the same Body of CHRIST Which was presented in the Temple, which was slain on the Cross, though under different conditions, a glorified Body, yet the same ; for there is but one Oblation, the Lamb of GOD.

iii. This Oblation sanctifies all our other offerings, so that with It we offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies. We present CHRIST, and CHRIST presents us to the Father ; His infinite merits sanctifying our nothingness, and making us accepted in the Beloved. (Eph., i., 6.).

Affections.—Realize the importance of the Presentation, and its continuation in the Holy Eucharist ; pray that you may join in the great oblation with deeper thankfulness ; resolve to offer with your next Communion something which shall cost you a sacrifice.

S. MATTHIAS.

RESPONSIBILITY OF VOCATION.

"His bishoprick let another take."—Acts., i. 20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the solemn election of S. Matthias to the office from which Judas fell.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for guidance in Vocation.

I. Consider some of the laws of Vocation.

i. GOD creates each soul for a certain work here, and for a special place in heaven hereafter, the attainment of the latter depending on the fulfilment of the former.

ii. GOD at some time in our life calls us to this special work; *i. e.* reveals to us our Vocation, the state of life in which only we can secure the place in heaven marked out for us in the purposes of God.

iii. If we lose our Vocation, that is, fail in this special work, *we* may be lost, but GOD's work will not suffer, He raises up another to take our place, and to accomplish His purposes.

II. Consider how this is exemplified in the election of S. Matthias.

i. Our Lord chose twelve men to do the special work of Apostles, and it is revealed that for those twelve there is a special place prepared in heaven; e. g. the twelve thrones, (S. Matt., xix, 28; S. Luke, xxii., 30); and the twelve foundations (Rev., xxi., 14).

ii. Our Lord himself gave to each his Vocation, *i. e.* chose personally the twelve, whom He saw to have the gifts necessary for this work, and among them was Judas.

iii. Judas fell from his office and Vocation; but the other Apostles, guided by the Holy Ghost, and realizing this law of Vocation, elected S. Matthias to fill his office here and his throne hereafter.

III. Consider the lessons of this:

i. Do I know my vocation? Do I recognize that GOD has called me to the work I am doing, or am I still waiting for His call?

ii. If my Vocation in life is settled, am I walking worthy of it? (Eph., iv, 1.)

iii. If my work has to be given to another to do, my place in heaven will be given to that other to occupy.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of Vocation; pray for faithful perseverance in the path of Vocation; resolve to examine yourself often as to your Vocation.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE B. V. MARY.

THE ACCEPTANCE OF VOCATION.

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."—S. Luke, i, 38.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angel Gabriel bringing GOD's message to S. Mary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perfect obedience to GOD's will.

I. Consider the preparation of the B. V. Mary:

i. By a life of prayer; one of the effects of real prayer is to bring our wills into conformity with the will of God.

ii. By the exercise of meditation; she had spent much of her young life in studying and considering the Holy Scriptures; and especially the Messianic prophecies; she knew the prophecy of Isaiah, vii., 14; "*Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son,*" and longed for its accomplishment, though she thought not of herself.

iii. By the cultivation of virtues; and especially of Purity and Humility.

II. Consider the Annunciation:

i. The dignity of the messenger; Gabriel, one of the highest of the angels of God.

ii. The dignity of his salutation; "*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*" Never was mortal addressed in terms so respectful by a messenger from GOD; it was a witness to S. Mary's sanctity.

iii. The dignity of the message; the Incarnation of the Word, her vocation to be the mother of GOD; that the HOLY GHOST should descend upon her, and by his operation JESUS should be born of her.

III. Consider the answer of the B. V. Mary:

i. As soon as, by her enquiries of the angel, she is assured that the message is from GOD, she accepts GOD's will without reservation, trusting herself entirely in His hands. When we have assured ourselves of GOD's purpose for us, do we trust ourselves to GOD? The HOLY GHOST has descended upon us, and by his operation in the order of grace JESUS is to be born in us. Are we endeavoring to co-operate in this work?

ii. It was an act of her free will; the world waited on that answer, "*Behold, the handmaid of the Lord;*" without it the Incarnation could not have been accomplished through Mary. How often GOD's blessings to others depend upon our giving ourselves as a willing instrument into GOD's hands.

iii. It was the preparation of a life spent in devotion which enabled her at this supreme moment so to act. It is only by a life of continual devotion, that we can be prepared to act rightly at the great crises of our life.

Affections.—Realize the important part which the co-operation of the B. V. Mary's will had in the Incarnation; pray for more conformity to the will of GOD; resolve to be more earnest in meditation and prayer, that you may be more resigned to GOD's will.

S. MARK'S DAY.

GRADUAL GROWTH OF GRACE.

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—S. Mark, iv., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Mark thinking of his own experiences in life as he wrote these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for patience.

There are peculiar to S. Mark's Gospel one parable and two miracles ; the parable of THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY, from which the text is taken, and THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN AT DECAPOLIS (Chap. vii.), and THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA (Chap. viii.); they each bring out the same thought, the slow and progressive character of the work.

I. Consider this as the characteristic teaching of S. Mark :

i. In S. Mark's account of our LORD's first parable (Chap. iv., 8) he inserts the words, "*sprang up and increased*;" and in the stages of growth marked out in his one peculiar parable, and in the stages of healing seen only in his two peculiar miracles, we may see this, as the especial "*heavenly doctrine of the Evangelist S. Mark*."

ii. This was the experience of S. Mark's own life ; failure at first when he went back from the work he had undertaken (Acts, xiii., 13, and xv., 38) ; but at last he has the witness of S. Paul himself, that he was *profitable* (II. Tim., iv., 11), and is chosen as the spiritual son of S. Peter, and blesses the world with the Gospel which bears his name, and comes to us with the authority of S. Peter, witnessing in this feature of its teaching to the experience of both their lives.

iii. This was the experience, too, of S. Peter's life ; gradual growth with many checks and failures ; it is the teaching of his Epistle. "*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity.*"—II. Peter, i., 5-7.

II. Consider this as the special characteristic of all God's dealings with man:

i. We see it in the order of nature ; in the history of the earth ; GOD sets in motion certain laws, and leaves them gradually, and, to us, slowly, to work out their results.

ii. We see it in the history of the Church ; the small company assembled in the Upper Chamber, gradually growing into the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world.

iii. We see it in the order of Grace, in each saintly life ; the seed of spiritual life is sown in Baptism, gradually it springs up, and watered by grace, ripened by the scorching sun of temptation, slowly growing through the successive days and nights of prosperity and adversity, it puts forth, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear ; and this perfected fruit, the full corn, is the counterpart of the seed from which it sprang ; so the end of spiritual growth is the Imitation of CHRIST ; the production in us of a Christlike nature ; but in this work we must be very patient, not expecting always to see our own growth, but like SS. Peter and Mark, with diligence, adding to our faith virtue, etc.

Affections.—Realize that our spiritual growth is to be the work of our whole life ; pray for perseverance ; resolve to be very patient under checks.

SS. PHILIP AND JAMES.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

"Jesus said unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—S. John, xiv., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate in the Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant, wherein was the golden pot that had Manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the Tables of the Covenant. (Heb., ix., 4.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray that CHRIST may be indeed your ALL. (Col., iii., 11.)

Among the Apostles there were degrees of spiritual apprehension; SS. Peter, John, James were probably the most advanced, SS. Thomas and Philip the slowest in their perception of CHRIST's teaching. Our LORD's answer to the question of S. Thomas, by the remark it drew from S. Philip, revealed the very small grasp of religious truth he had obtained, in the ignorance he manifested as to the nature of the Person of CHRIST.

I. Consider our LORD's reproach to S. Philip, "*Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip.*"

i. To how many might our LORD say this now? He has been with them all their life, yet how many have no clear knowledge, either intellectually or morally, of CHRIST.

ii. Some few have an intellectual apprehension of CHRIST, know many facts about Him.

iii. How very few know Him with that knowledge which is life eternal; know Him experimentally, as S. Paul knew Him, when he bore witness to the Colossians that "*Christ is all.*"

II. The Ark of the Covenant was one of the great types of our LORD, and its contents, the Rod, the Tables of the Law, and the Manna, represented the three aspects under which our LORD in to-day's Gospel reveals Himself.

i. The Rod points to CHRIST as the Way.

ii. The Law shows Him as the Truth.

iii. The Manna typifies Him as the Bread of Heaven, the Life.

III. Consider these three aspects of Christ:

i. He is the Way: What a maze of paths are before us in the world! and yet our LORD has told us there is but one, which can lead to that happiness, which is at once man's desire and end; and that one is HIMSELF. I AM THE WAY. "*No man cometh unto the Father but by Me,*" and the experience of eighteen centuries of saints has proved His words.

ii. He is the Truth: How many have asked Pilate's question, what is Truth; how many have spent their lives trying to answer it. Our LORD solves all such philosophical perplexities in His answer, I AM THE TRUTH. Do we believe His words, and obey them? or, do we, while professing to believe explain them so as to suit our own inclinations?

iii. He is the Life: how many live merely the life of nature, which is but a continuous succession of deaths; the only real life is that which is hid with CHRIST in GOD, that which we live by virtue of our sacramental union with CHRIST. To a dying world our LORD says, Except ye eat my Flesh and drink my Blood, ye have no life in you, for, I AM THE LIFE.

Affections.—Adore our LORD as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; pray that by Him you may come to the Father; resolve to follow Him more closely.

SS. PHILIP AND JAMES.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."—S. James, i., 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on the Mount saying, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

PRELUDE. II.—Pray that in your life you may manifest to the world a practical religion, which may be to the glory of GOD.

I. Consider that the various Apostles, in their lives and writings, bring out different aspects of the truth. S. Paul and S. John are the most theological, S. James is perhaps the most practical writer of the New Testament. Leaving doctrinal questions, he occupies himself in his Epistle in dealing with practical points of Christian life; and in this he follows the inclination of his temperament, which was of the phlegmatic, or intensely practical type.

II. Consider some of the points on which S. James warns and instructs us:

- i. The danger of self-conceit; Be ye doers, not hearers only (i., 22).
- ii. The practice of charity; (a.) In visiting the distressed and by sympathy alleviating their sorrows (i., 27). (b.) In almsgiving, under the guidance not of human respect, but of true love and pity (ii., 1-6).
- iii. The law of temptation (i., 2-16).
- iv. The danger and effect of sins of the tongue (iii).
- v. Practical penitence after falls (iv., 8-10).
- vi. The importance of the exercise of patience (v. 7-11).
- vii. Practical instruction on ministering to the sick, sending for the Priest, that he may attend to three things, (a.) Unction (v. 14); (b.) Confession of sin (v. 16); (c.) Prayer (v. 16-19).

III. Examine yourself on each of these duties of practical religion, and consider how you have fulfilled them.

Affections.—Realize your responsibility of leading others to glorify God by the consistency of your religious life; pray for grace to be practical and exact in the performance of your religious duties; resolve now to take up earnestly some one duty which you have failed in.

S. BARNABAS.

THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

"Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation."—Acts, iv., 36.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Barnabas introducing S. Paul to the Apostles, when all were afraid of him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a spirit of kindness.

Barnabas was so called by the Apostles on account of the spirit of kindness which was the great characteristic of his life.

I. Consider the example S. Barnabas sets of this virtue:

- i. In selling his property to minister to the needs of the Apostles. (Acts iv., 37.)
- ii. In being as it were sponsor for S. Paul when he was looked upon with suspicion by the others. (Acts, ix., 26, 27.)
- iii. In overlooking more readily than S. Paul the dereliction of S. Mark, and being ready to trust him again at once; here his kindness probably made him too lenient.

II. Consider the power of kindness:

- i. It is the power, within the reach of all, of making the world happy, or at least of so diminishing the amount of unhappiness, as to make it quite a different world.
- ii. The greatest amount of unhappiness, as well as the worst kind, comes from our conduct to one another, because it is not controlled by kindness: and so we may say that the world is only an unkind world, on account of the lack of kindness in us individuals who compose it.
- iii. Kindness is the overflowing of self upon others; kindness in God was creation; it is essentially being unselfish, doing to others as we would wish them to do to us.

III. Consider some of the effects of kindness:

- i. Kindness is the best missionary of CHRIST; it has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence, or learning.
- ii. Kindness brings out the good in the characters of others; it shows a man that he is worth something, and appeals to his self-respect.
- iii. Kindness is contagious, one act leads to another, it is seldom alone.
- iv. Kindness is a great encouragement to the weak to persevere; a kind word often starts a soul again that has nearly given up in despair.
- v. Kindness is one of the great helps God has given us here to aid us to bear our sorrows, by it we may indeed bear one another's burdens, and without increasing our own.

Affections.—Realize what kindness has done in the world; examine how far you have failed in this duty; pray that you may be more unselfish; resolve on some definite act of kindness.

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